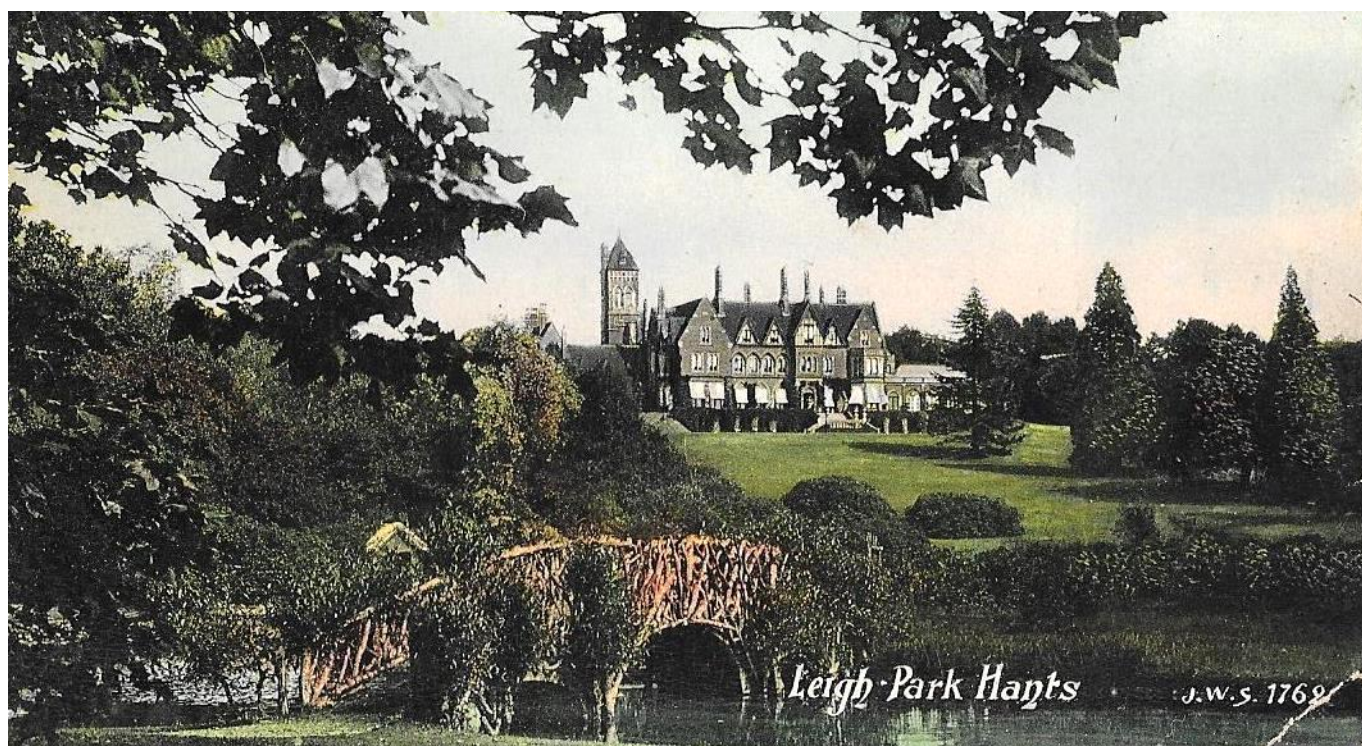


William Henry Stone of Leigh Park

His life, including his political career and the
changing face of the Leigh Park Estate



Stones' Leigh Park House from the lake and Staunton's Chinese bridge

Steve Jones

Havant Borough History Booklet No. 65

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Melicent (Helps) Stone, undated portrait



William Henry Stone MP, line drawing from the
Illustrated London News, February 1873

Edited by Ralph Cousins and Richard Brown

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William Henry Stone of Leigh Park

His life, including his political career and the changing face of the Leigh Park Estate

The history of the Leigh Park Estate, from its origins in the middle of the eighteenth century through to its formation as a country park towards the end of the twentieth century, is littered with the footprints of the various owners who have left their mark on the estate. Firstly came Samuel Harrison who built the first Leigh House in around 1790 which was later embellished and enlarged by both William Garrett and Sir George Staunton Bt. Both Garrett, who rightly can claim the honour of creating the estate, and Staunton who acquired it in 1819 and turned it into one of the foremost estates in this part of Hampshire with its wonderful parkland and gardens, have left their mark on the estate which can still be seen today. Today the country park which covers the remains of this once glorious estate bears the name of Sir George Staunton, who created over a number of years one of the finest gardens of its time.

Remains of Staunton's gardens and parkland can still be seen, including the lake known as Leigh Water, but it was the man who followed on from Staunton as the owner of Leigh Park who changed the aspect of the estate, almost unrecognisable from the days of Staunton. William Henry Stone acquired the estate in 1861 and resided at Leigh Park for only thirteen years but as we shall see during this short period he left a legacy, not only at Leigh Park, but in the wider neighbourhood.

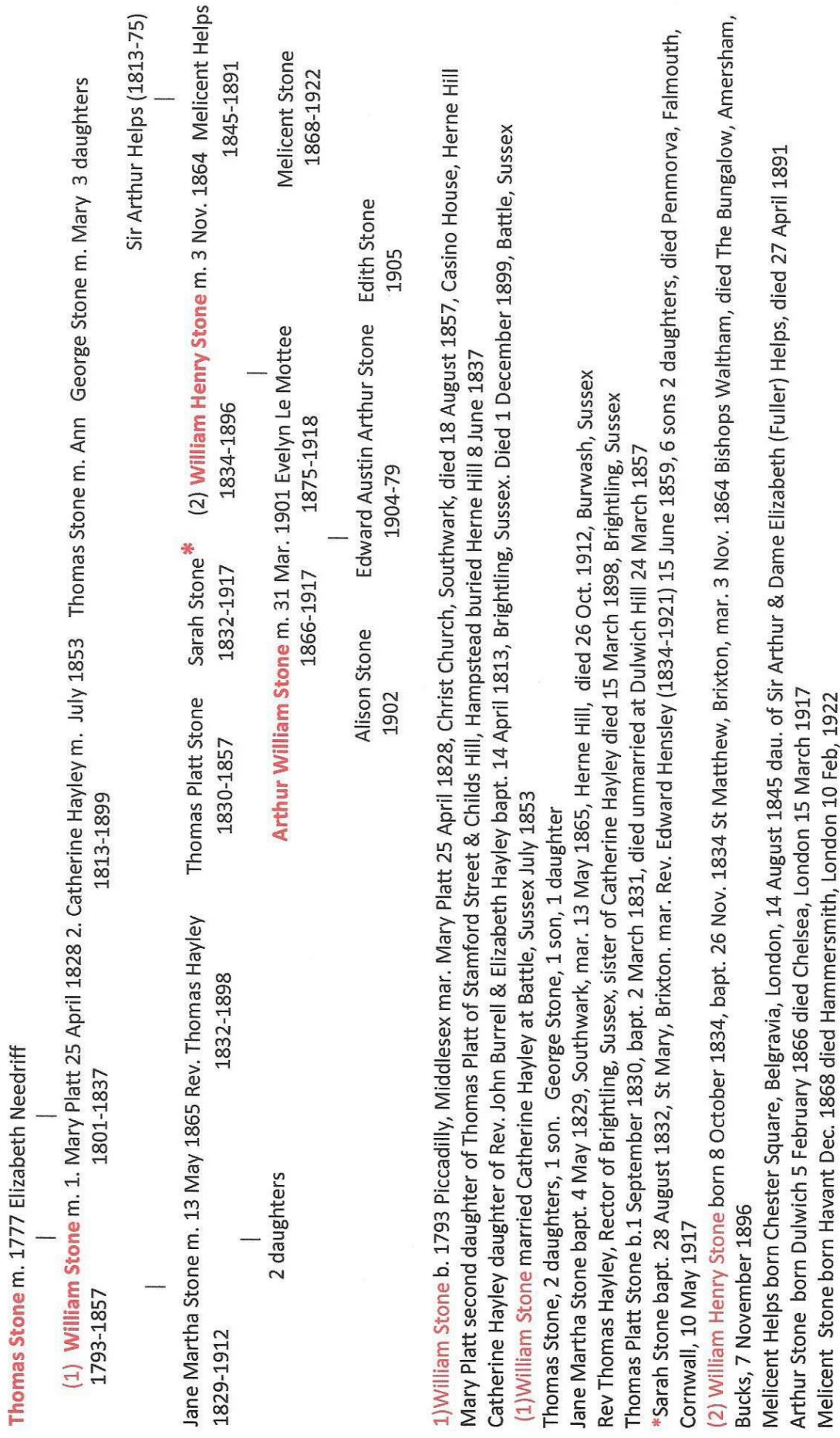
Stone Family Background

William Henry Stone was born 8 October 1834 at Denmark Hill, also known as Dulwich Hill, now part of Camberwell, the son of William Stone, a wealthy silk merchant and broker and Mary his wife. He was baptised at St Matthew's church, Brixton, on 26 November 1834. Not too much information can be found on the Stone family genealogy but it is believed the family may originally have had connections to the Sussex area of Framfield in the east of the county and originated from Nicholas Stone, a seventeenth century landowner.

His father, also William, was born in 1793 in Piccadilly, Middlesex, the son of Thomas Stone and Elizabeth his wife. He married on 25 April 1828 Mary, the second daughter of Thomas Platt of Child's Hill House, Hampstead, at Christ Church, Southwark. Thomas Platt had by 1811 acquired a farmhouse on the edge of Hampstead Heath and by that date had enlarged the house as a 'pleasing and unostentatious' brick house set in well wooded grounds. After his death in 1829 the house became the home of his son Thomas Pell Platt, the orientalist and one of the earliest members of the Royal Asiatic Society who sat on its oriental translation committee of which Sir George Staunton was deputy chairman. He was also a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London. With his links to China and the Royal Asiatic Society he must have had strong connections with Sir George Staunton and correspondence between both of them survives and it may have been the case that he even visited Staunton at Leigh Park.

William Stone it appeared made his wealth as a silk merchant and broker, possibly with links to the East India Company. He was a partner in the company of E. Durant & Co., Silk Brokers of 11 Copthall Court, Throgmorton Street. It was in this capacity that he gave evidence in May 1832 to the Select Committee on the Silk Trade appointed to examine the state of the silk trade at that time in which under examination he stated: *I have been acquainted with the trade for 17 years as a silkman, and partly as a manufacturer for seven years, and as a broker for ten years.*

William Henry Stone Family Tree





CHILD'S HILL HOUSE,
Hampstead, Middlesex.
(The Seat of The Platt Esq)

Child's Hill House, Hampstead, the home of Thomas Platt (d.1828) and his son Thomas Pell Platt (d.1852), the grandfather and uncle of William Henry Stone

He certainly also had an interest in Pawson & Co, dealing in the wholesale supply of textiles, clothing, and piece goods, at 9 St Paul's Churchyard but apart from these facts little is known of his business interests.

China and Turkey Raw Silk

*For Public Sale, at 19 Coleman-street - About 130 BALES CHINA RAW SILK,
About 80 ditto, Turkey ditto, immediately to follow on the same day the close of
East India Company's Silk Sale,*

Commencing the 21st instant. Catalogues will be delivered in due time.

E. Durant & Co., Brokers, 11 Copthall Court, Throgmorton-street

The Times, 16 February 1832

Mary Stone died in June 1837 when William Henry Stone was only three years old and it was around this time that his father William acquired the lease of Casino House, Dulwich Hill. Records suggest that William Stone took the lease of Casino House in the late 1830s but it is possible that he may have been there earlier as his address at the time of his marriage in April 1828 is given as Denmark-hill which is close to Dulwich Hill. The house and estate remained with William and William Henry Stone until around 1880.

Casino House, or Casina, as it was also known, had been built in 1796 by Richard Shawe, a wealthy lawyer, who had successfully defended Warren Hastings, the former Governor General of Bengal, on corruption charges in a case that lasted seven years. Shawe was well paid for this and also acquired a

considerable fortune by marrying well. The house and 16 acres of gardens and park were situated at Herne Hill on the southern side of Denmark Hill but to confuse matters further it was generally known throughout the nineteenth century as Dulwich Hill. It is believed that the architect John Nash designed the house along with Humphrey Repton who designed the gardens. Co-incidentally Richard Shawe's nephew George August Shawe (1782-1850), the son of his brother Robert Shawe, built Shawefield House (now Elmleigh House) in what is now Elmleigh Road in Havant in around 1821. There is a possibility that the Shawe and the Stone families knew each other but this cannot be substantiated. There were members of the Shawe family still living at Shawefield at the time of William Henry Stone moving to Leigh Park in 1861.

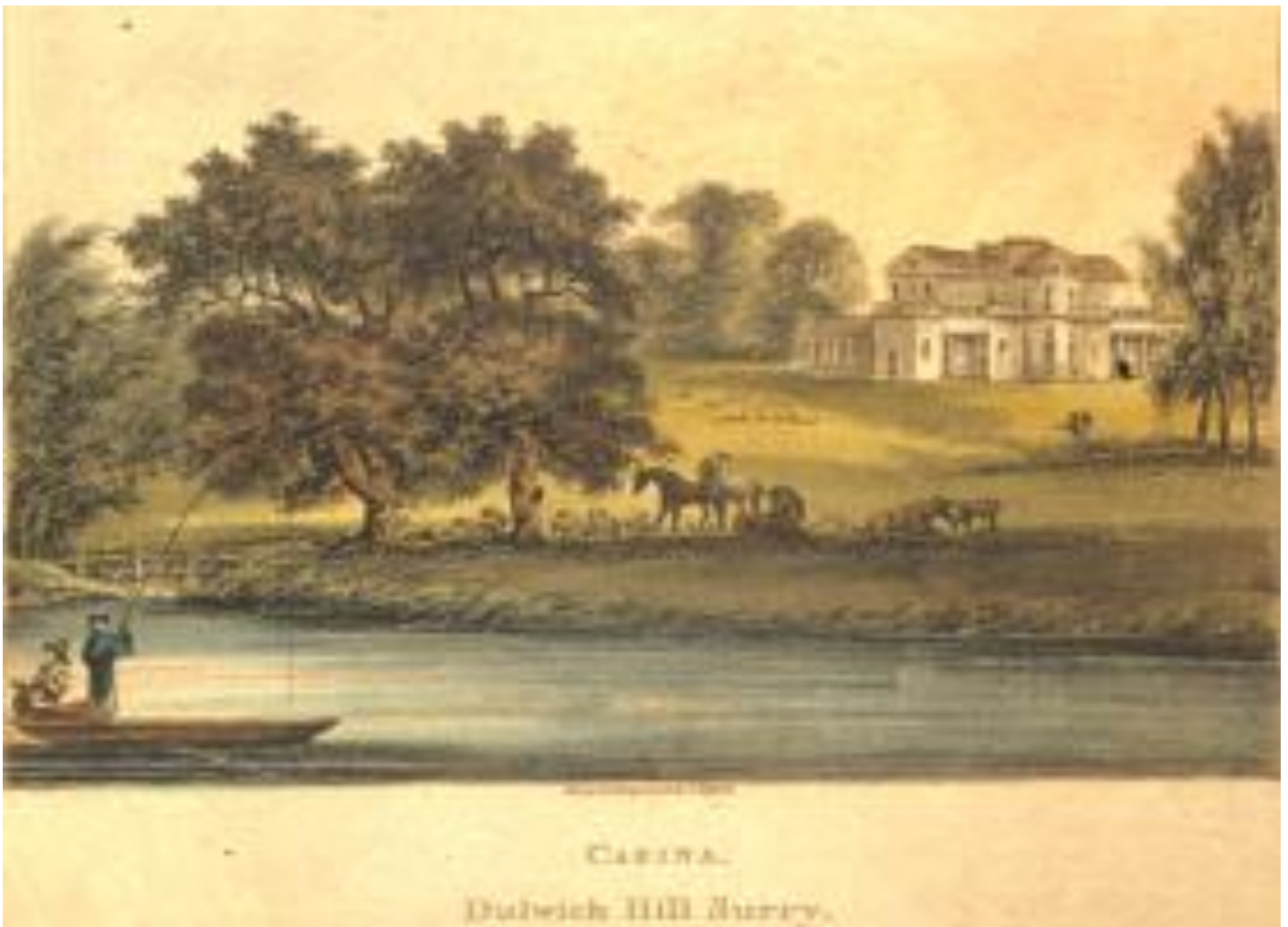
Richard Shawe died in 1816 and according to his original will left his wife the use of the 'mansion house at Dulwich Hill... which I have at great expense erected'. His wife refused to live at the property after his death and throughout almost the remainder of the century it was tenanted out. One of the most famous occupiers is thought to have been Joseph Bonaparte, Napoleon Bonaparte's brother and former King of Spain, who stayed briefly in England in the 1830s. Following on from this illustrious tenant William Stone lived here until his death in 1857 when the tenancy was carried on until around 1880 by his son William Henry Stone.

An example of William Stone's status can be gleaned from the census return of 1851 for Casino House where he is in residence and where he is recorded at the age of 58 a widower with his two daughters - Jane, aged 22, Sarah, aged 15. Also recorded in the household is his sister-in-law Martha Platt, aged 51 and two nieces Ann Stone, aged 21 and Elizabeth Stone aged 19 and a nephew Henry Stone aged 18. Eight indoor servants are also recorded including house-keeper and butler. The two nieces and nephew were the children of Thomas and Ann Stone. It is unclear when Thomas and Ann died but like his brother William Stone it may have been the case that Thomas was also involved in the silk trade as a partner in the silk manufacturing company of Stone & Brooks based in Spitalfields but alas this cannot be proven.

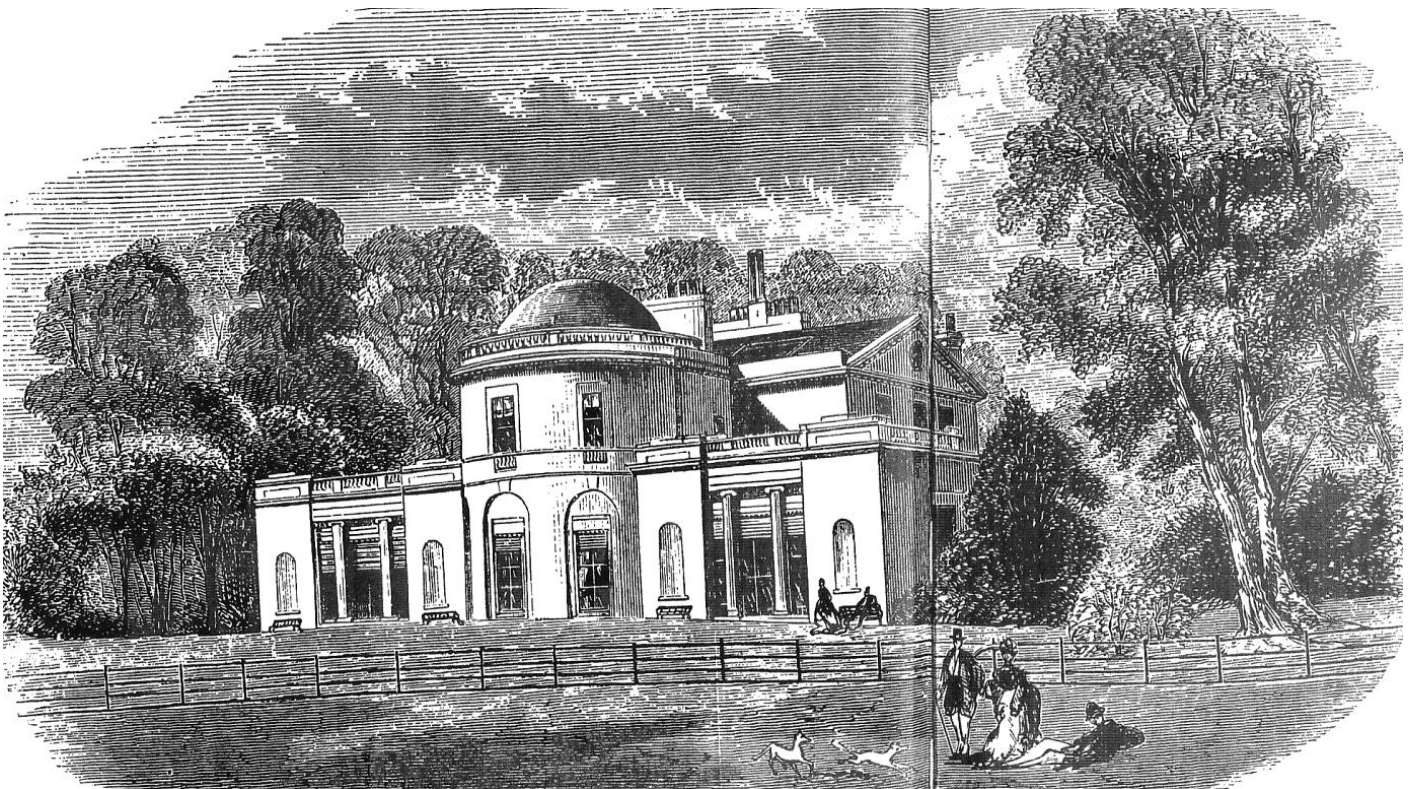
William Henry Stone allowed the Surrey Floricultural Society, based in South London, to hold its annual flower shows in the grounds. These continued there in the 1880s after he had left. Casino House was demolished in 1906 but thankfully part of Repton's gardens still remain in the form of Sunray Gardens, a park for the local population of Dulwich Hill to enjoy.

After the death of Mary Stone, William married again, this time in July 1853 to Catherine Hayley, daughter of the Revd John Burrill Hayley, Rector of Brightling, Sussex. At the time of the marriage William Stone was 60 and his wife was 40. William Stone died 18 August 1857 at Casino House; Catherine Stone is recorded there on the 1861 census age 48 and described as a fundholder. William Henry Stone is recorded as head of the household, aged 26 along with his sister Jane, unmarried at that time, and aged 32.

William Henry Stone was the youngest of four siblings; Jane Martha, the eldest, born April 1829; Thomas Platt, born 1 September 1830 and Sarah born August 1832. Jane Martha married on 13 May 1865 the Rev Thomas Hayley, the only son of Revd John Burrill Hayley, Rector of Brightling, Sussex and remarkably the brother of Catherine Hayley who had married William Stone in 1853. The Rev Hayley who followed his father as Rector of Brightling and Jane Martha went on to have three daughters. What this meant was that Catherine Stone, who was nineteen years older than her brother was step-mother to William Stone and his siblings as well as sister-in-law to Jane. Jane died 26 October 1912 at Burwash, East Sussex, and her husband having died at Brightling, 15 March 1898.



Casina or Casino House, early 19th century



Casino House, 'A Villa in the Grand Style', print, circa 1870

Thomas Platt Stone, who was four years older than his brother William, died young at the age of 26 on 24 March 1857 at Dulwich Hill. He entered Trinity College, Cambridge at Michaelmas 1849 and gained a B.A. in 1853 and M.A. in 1856. Sarah Stone was baptised 28 July 1832 at St. Mary's church, Brixton, her exact date of birth is unclear. She married on 15 June 1859 the Revd Edward Hensley, Rector of Falmouth, Cornwall. They went on to have eight children, six sons and two daughters. Two of the sons, Rev Charles Geoffrey Hensley and Rev. Stephen Hensley followed their father into the church. Sarah died at Penmorva, Falmouth, Cornwall, 10 May 1917. Her husband died at Falmouth in 1921.

William Henry Stone followed his brother Thomas first to Harrow and then to Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1853, where he excelled, gaining his B.A. (30th Wrangler, 8th Classic) in 1857 and M.A. in 1860. On 10 October 1859 he was elected a Fellow of Trinity College and held the position until 1864. It was at Cambridge that he met a man who would play a large part in his life during his period at Leigh Park, Richard William Drew, but more of that later.

William Henry Stone and Leigh Park

Sir George Staunton died on 10 August 1859 and due to the terms of his will the Leigh Park Estate, along with his London home, were to be inherited by his cousin Henry Cormick Lynch, a former captain in the Madras Infantry. An older cousin, George Staunton Lynch inherited Sir George's Irish estates. Unfortunately, after moving into Leigh Park Captain Lynch died of cholera, only six weeks after Staunton's death, on 22 September 1859. Leigh Park and the London home passed to Henry Cormick Lynch's eldest son, who like his uncle was named George Staunton Lynch. Under a proviso of Sir George's will the name of Staunton had to be taken as part of the surname meaning uncle and nephew both became George Staunton Lynch-Staunton, and this took place under Royal licence on 2 December 1859.

George Staunton Lynch-Staunton, the younger, was only 20 when he inherited Leigh Park and during 1860 Staunton's London home in Devonshire Street was sold. The Leigh Park Estate was gradually being wound up and by September 1860 the estate of nearly 1,000 acres was put up for sale with an auction planned for the 17 October of that year.



Leigh Park House, photographed around the time of its acquisition by William Henry Stone, circa 1860 (The only known photograph of the first Leigh Park House).



Sir George Thomas Staunton by
Sir Martin Archer Shee, 1833

Confusion reigns over the sale of the Leigh Park Estate at this time, certainly the estate was sold, as a notification in the local press testifies:

Havant, October 20, 1860

SALE BY MESSRS. FAREBROTHER, CLARK, & LYE AT THE MART, LONDON. – The very beautiful residential freehold estate distinguished as Leigh Park, only one and a half mile from the town of Havant and the railway station, about midway between Portsmouth and Chichester, and only two hours' drive from London, for many years the favourite seat of the late Sir George Thomas Staunton, Bart., seated on gently rising ground, in a beautiful wooded park, approached from the road by lodge entrances, with carriage drives, delightful pleasure grounds and gardens of unrivalled beauty; ornamental woods and plantations, together with the charming lake, with three islands, handsome bridges, summer houses, boat houses, etc.; also several valuable farms at Havant and Bedhampton; with capital homesteads and suitable buildings, detached lands at Havant, the whole forming a demain of nearly one thousand acres; also the valuable manors of Havant and Flood, was sold on Wednesday in one lot for £60,000.

Hampshire Telegraph, 20 October 1860

Whatever the reason the Leigh Park Estate was again put up for auction in July 1861 with an auction set for the 31st of that month. It is unclear why this happened; did the first sale fall through or was it due to the terms of the Lynch-Staunton inheritance? Henry Cormick Lynch died intestate and possible legal issues may have curtailed the first sale. Certainly the second auction was advertised by the agents 'as received instructions from the Trustees under the Will of the late Sir George Thomas Staunton, Bart.' No such terms were used in the first sale. At the time of Sir George Staunton and Henry Cormick Lynch's deaths George Staunton Lynch-Staunton was only aged 20 and could not sale the property until he reached the age of 21.

HAMPSHIRE.

The Particulars and Conditions of Sale

OF THE VERY BEAUTIFUL

RESIDENTIAL FREEHOLD ESTATE

DISTINGUISHED AS

LEIGH PARK,

Only One and a Half Mile from the Town of HAVANT and the RAILWAY STATION, about midway between PORTSMOUTH and CHICHESTER, and only Two Hours Ride from LONDON,

For many Years the favorite Seat of the late Sir GEO. THOS. STAUNTON, Bart.

SEATED ON GENTLY RISING GROUND, IN

A BEAUTIFUL WOODED PARK,

Approached from the Road by LODGE ENTRANCES, with CARRIAGE DRIVES,

Delightful Pleasure Grounds and Gardens of unrivalled beauty,

ORNAMENTAL WOODS AND PLANTATIONS,

TOGETHER WITH

THE CHARMING LAKE, WITH THREE ISLANDS,

HANDSOME BRIDGES, SUMMER HOUSES, BOAT HOUSE, &c.

ALSO,

SEVERAL VALUABLE FARMS,

AT HAVANT AND BEDHAMPTON,

WITH CAPITAL HOMESTEADS AND SUITABLE BUILDINGS,

DETACHED LANDS AT HAVANT,

THE WHOLE FORMING A DOMAIN OF NEARLY

ONE THOUSAND ACRES;

ALSO, THE

VALUABLE MANORS OF HAVANT & FLOOD.

Which will be Sold by Auction,

BY MESSRS.

FAREBROTHER, CLARK & LYE

At Garraway's Coffee House, 'Change Alley, Cornhill, London,

On **WEDNESDAY, the 17th of OCTOBER, 1860,**

AT TWELVE O'CLOCK, IN THREE LOTS,

By direction of the Trustees under the Will of the late Sir GEORGE THOMAS STAUNTON, Bart.

The Mansion may be Viewed by Cards only (on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, between the hours of Ten and Six) which may be had of Messrs. FAREBROTHER, CLARK and LYE, 6, Lancaster Place, Strand, London, W.C. The Park and Gardens may be Viewed on any day,—Mr. Scott, the Gardener, will shew the Gardens, and the Game-keeper will shew the Farms and Lands.

Descriptive Particulars, with Plans and Views, (at 2s. 6d. each) may be had of Messrs. Few & Co. Solicitors, Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, W.C.; of Edward Hoskins, Esq. Solicitor, Gosport; at the Bear Inn, Havant; George, Portsmouth; Dolphin, Southampton; Red Lion, Fareham; at Garraway's; and at the Offices of Messrs. FAREBROTHER, CLARK and LYE, No. 6, Lancaster Place, Strand, W.C.

J. DAVY AND SONS, PRINTERS, 137, LONG ACRE.

Sales Catalogue of the sale of the Leigh Park Estate, 17 October 1860

The 1861 census, taken on the 7th and 8th of April, records George Staunton Lynch-Staunton, aged 21, at Leigh Park House, along with his mother Charlotte, aged 55, brother Alfred, aged 20, and four sisters. Interestingly, William Stone is recorded living at the family home of Casino House, Dulwich Hill, aged 26, along with his step mother Catherine, age 48, and sister Jane. He is described as a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge and J.P. for Surrey.

The sales particulars for auction of the estate in July 1861 give us a good description of the Leigh Park Estate at the time of Sir George Staunton's death. It cannot be over emphasised the wonderful state of the landscaped parkland and gardens which were created and embellished by Staunton over the preceding forty years and this is shown in the details of the sales particulars:

HAMPSHIRE IN THE COUNTY OF SOUTHAMPTON
The very Beautiful Residential
FREEHOLD ESTATE AND LANDED INVESTMENT
Distinguished as
LEIGH PARK

Together with the Manors of Havant and Flood, and Comprising a capital Mansion, seated in a finely-timbered Park.

Delightful Pleasure Grounds, and Gardens of unrivalled beauty, Ornamental Woods & Plantations, Several valuable FARMS, Capital Homesteads and suitable Buildings, forming a Domain of about 1,000 ACRES.

Messrs. Farebrother, Clark, and Lye have received instructions from the Trustees under the Will of the late Sir George Thomas Staunton, Bart., to SELL, at Garraway's Coffee-house, Change-alley, on Wednesday, July 31st, in three lots (unless an acceptable offer is previously made by private contract).

The very beautiful RESIDENTIAL FREEHOLD ESTATE distinguished as Leigh Park, only one and a half mile from the town of Havant and the railway station, about midway between Portsmouth and Chichester, and only two hours' ride from London, in the parishes of Bedhampton and Havant.-

The mansion, for many years the favourite seat of the late Sir George Thomas Staunton, Bart., is seated on gently rising ground, in a beautiful wooded park, approached from the road by two lodge entrances, with carriage drives, and is of handsome elevation, brick built, and faced with Southampton tiles on three sides, with portico entrance to the eastern front, and a colonnade to the south front, and contains numerous principle and secondary bed-chambers, entrance hall with niches for statuary, loft and elegant drawing room, highly finished, with windows opening to the lawn, embracing the most charming sea and land views; communicating is a smaller drawing room, similarly furnished, capital dining room opening to conservatory and orangery, breakfast room, billiard room, study, corridor, and a beautiful Gothic octagon-shaped library with stained glass windows and highly decorated ceiling, ample domestic offices, with spacious cellarage in the basement.

There are good coach-houses, stabling, laundry, and other out-buildings. The pleasure grounds, in immediate connection with the mansion, are most notably beautifully laid out in the gardenesque style, the undulation of the surface contributing largely to their beauty.

The north flower garden is the most remarkable for its choice roses. Connected with this is the west flower garden, with the finest specimens of pampas grass, yuccas, arunda donax or reeds, giving it a distinct Oriental character; the arboretum, including araucaria imbricata, deodar, cedars, cryptomeria, cypress, and taxodiums; Victoria Regia, or lily-house, with a fine specimen of the great water lily, as well as the different varieties of the nelumbium or Indian lotus, and other tropical aquatics, with basin 30 feet diameter; heath banana house, large tropical house 100 feet long, with several divisions, and aquarium; two peach houses, one heated, the other for late fruit; vineries planted with Hamburg and Muscat grapes; three pine pits, propagating house, large greenhouse, used for palms, ferns, and other plants from temperate climates; kitchen garden with keeper's house, gardener's cottage, etc.; extensive gravelled and green rides, broad walks leading through shrubberies edged with coniferous and other trees.

At the upper and highest end of the pleasure grounds is the look-out, commanding from each stage of the building the most extended and varied landscapes, embracing a great portion of the Isle of Wight, Hayling Island, Portsdown Hill, the Havant Thicket, originally part of the ancient forest of Bere.

In the foreground of this delightful picture is the charming lake, with three islands, handsome bridges, summer houses in the English, Turkish, Swiss and Chinese styles, boat-houses, etc.; extensive pleasure ground, interspersed with winding walks, numerous rustic summer-houses, shaded retreats, a beautiful and classic Temple and grotto; large park studded with majestic oaks, beautiful lime, birch, cedar and elm trees; plantations, numerous copses, with shooting paths, pleasure rides and drives.

The whole of the forgoing is in hand; early possession will be given.

Bedhampton and Home Farms, with good farm-houses and extensive agricultural buildings, let to Mr J.B. Clarke, farm and lands let to Mr Softley; land at Durrants let to Mr Pearson; numerous cottages, part recently built and of neat elevation; plots of accommodation land; the whole about 1,000 acres, and let to a highly respectable tenantry. The manors of Havant and Flood giving, with other valuable privileges, the right of shooting over above 2,000 acres.

The Hambledon Foxhounds hunt the district, and the game is strictly preserved.

The property adjoins the estates of Lord Sherborne, Sir J.S. Clarke Jervoise, the Stanstead property, belonging to Mrs Dixon, the lands of Mrs Spencer, and others. The soil is naturally genial and good, being on the Hampshire basin, having the Southdown's in the background.

Detached lands at Havant, near the railway station, with extensive frontage to good roads, immediately available for building purposes.

The mansion may be viewed by cards only (on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, between the hours of ten and six), which may be had of Messrs Farebrother, Clarke & Lye, 6 Lancaster-place, Strand, W.C. The gardens and pleasure grounds can be seen on application to Mr Scott, the gardener; and the parklands and farm will be shown by the gamekeeper.

Hampshire Telegraph, 22 July 1861

The outcome of the sale was that William Stone duly acquired the Leigh Park Estate for £60,000, whether it was he that bought the estate at the time of the first sale is debatable but anyhow at the end of September (Michaelmas) 1861 Stone was given possession of the estate.

Interestingly, after the auction sale of 31 July 1861 another sale followed this with the sale and auction of all of Sir George Staunton's furniture and effects of his mansion, including his vast collection of books, and even live stock from the Home Farm. The sale of 7 October 1861 is worth recording as it finally ends the long association of Sir George Staunton with Leigh Park and as one historian noted '*the new broom begins*':

LEIGH PARK, near HAVANT, HAMPSHIRE

Furniture and Effects of the Mansion, Grand Piano-forte, Billiard Table, Chinese Paintings, Lanterns and Screens, Saddle and Harness, Horses, Carriages, Waggon, Carts, Iron Pink Roller, six Alderney Cows, ten fat Pigs, and numerous Effects.

Messrs Farebrother, Clarke, & Lye having disposed of the Leigh Park Estate, the property of the late Sir George Staunton, Bart., are instructed to SELL by AUCTION, on the premises, on Monday, October 7 1861, and following days, at 12 for 1 o'clock each day –

The FURNITURE and EFFECTS of the Mansion, comprising a rosewood Drawing-room suite covered in crimson India silk, of chairs, sofas, couches, curtains, valuable clocks, noble chimney glasses, and mirrors, full compass grand piano-forte by Oetzmann and Plumb, in mahogany case, satinwood and rosewood cabinets and tables, bookcases, ornamental items, 500 volumes of Books, Chinese paintings, prints, and imperial lanterns, richly ornamented screens, figures, and banners, mahogany dining tables, chairs, sideboard, Brussels and Turkey carpets. In the principal and secondary bedrooms, mahogany and 4-post bedsteads, excellent bedding, mahogany wardrobes, chests of drawers, washstands, glasses, and the usual appendages. Services of china and glass, coppers, and the requisites for the kitchen and offices, patent mangle and laundry effects. A fancy iron-grey mare, a thorough and well-known hunter, 2 handsome well-bred bay mares, with black points, ridden by ladies, and a brougham mare, a step piece barouche, by Laurie and Marner, a capital dog-cart, a spring cart, a Bath chair, sets of harness and saddlery, six handsome Alderney and half-bred cows and heifers, ten fat porkers, two dung carts, a waggon, capital iron park roller, hurdles, and numerous effects.

Hampshire Telegraph, 28 September 1861

As regards the above sale it would look to modern eyes as a sad end to a distinguished life and especially to Staunton's life at Leigh Park. It would appear that the Lynch and Lynch-Staunton family had no sentimental or for that matter any particular feeling for Leigh Park. It may have been different if Henry Cormick Lynch had not died so soon and the family may have continued there for many more years. As for Stone it was a chance for the first time to create his own home and leave his mark on his own estate.

At the time of acquiring Leigh Park Stone was just short of his 27th birthday, unmarried, and not long out of university. His father had died in 1857 leaving his estate to be divided between his second wife Catherine and three remaining children with William Henry Stone inheriting the bulk of his father's estate. Thomas Platt Stone, William Henry's elder brother, had died six months previous to his father's death in August 1857. It would appear logical that Stone bought Leigh Park out of the proceeds of his father's estate.

In the same year as acquiring the Leigh Park Estate Stone became a Justice of the Peace for Surrey, still maintaining Casino House at Dulwich Hill as well as his new home at Leigh Park.

Leigh Park – A New Era Begins – The Building of a New Mansion

William Stone only owned the Leigh Park Estate for a little over thirteen years but within that period the estate went through dramatic and colossal changes, with whole rafts of Staunton's gardens being swept away and a new mansion being built to replace the Georgian home of Staunton and William Garrett.

Stone obviously did not see what Staunton saw in relation to the pleasure grounds; Staunton had created the park and gardens to his own personal taste. He took the park created by William Garrett and moulded it over many years to reflect his taste, and probably his memories, in creating gardens with for example a Chinese theme here and an American theme there and also taking inspiration from established English gardens such as at Stourhead and the new wave of late 18th and early 19th century garden designers such as Humphrey Repton and J.C. Loudon. It was a parkland created in his own image, with a lot of the design of the gardens carried out by Staunton himself, with help from Lewis Vulliamy who designed most of the garden features for him. It was a park and garden of eclectic taste and especially with Staunton's links to China and his association with people like Joseph Hooker, the director of Kew Gardens, and other plantsmen, it is fair to say that it was one man's garden and it belonged to one man.

It could be said that Stone wanted what Staunton had achieved, an estate that reflected his tastes and this is probably what he got. Soon after acquiring the estate Alexander Scott, Staunton's head gardener for almost 25 years, left to take over the running full time of the Northgate Nursery at Chichester and was replaced temporarily by Thomas Davies, aged 25, who in turn was replaced by George Young who followed Stone from Casino House where he previously acted as gardener for Stone there.

The biggest change at Leigh Park came with the building of a new mansion and the demolition of Staunton's house. Soon after purchasing the estate Stone engaged the architect Richard William Drew, the same age as Stone, and a former student at Trinity College, Cambridge at the same time as Stone to draw up plans for a new mansion.

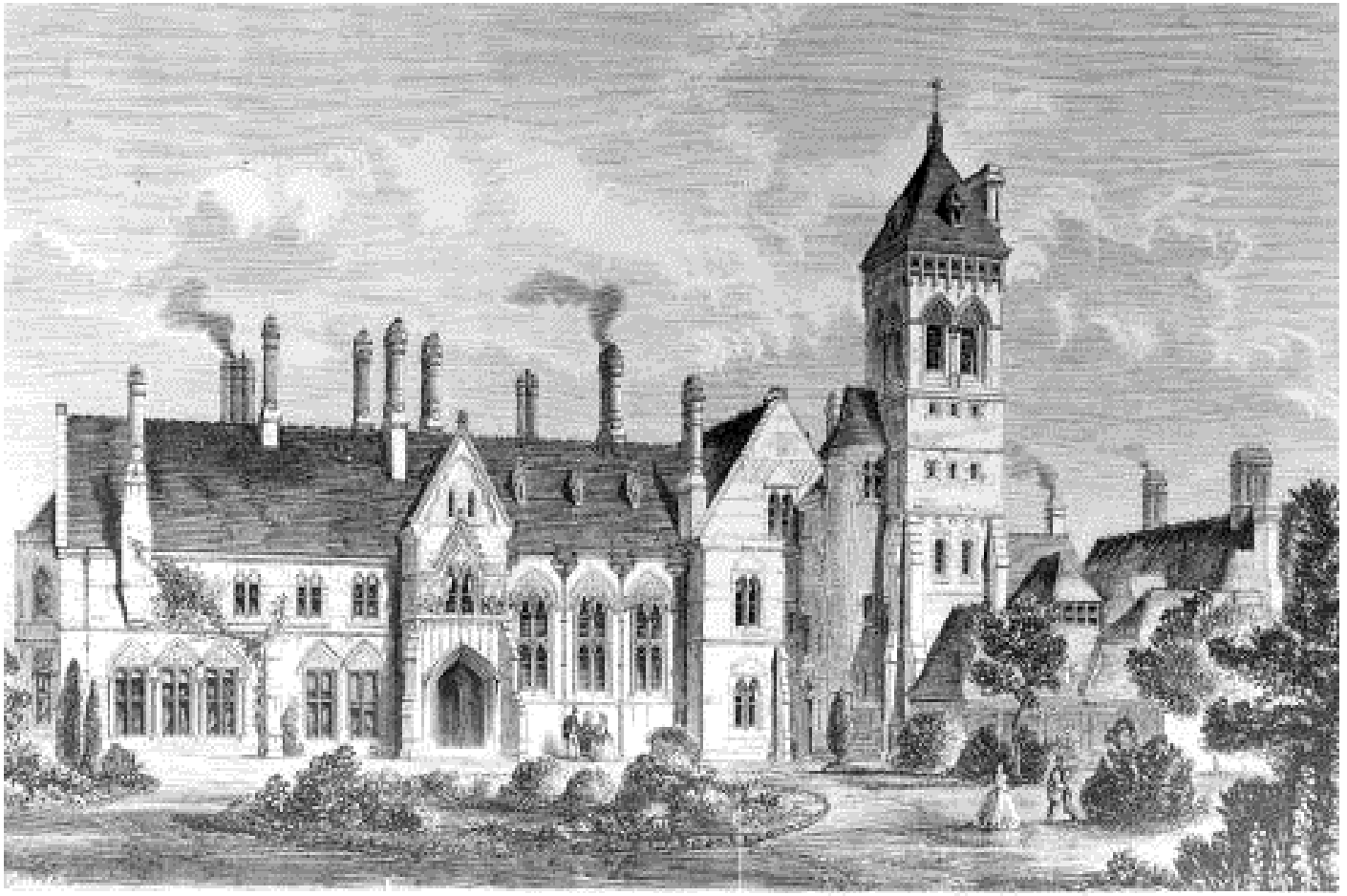
It has been suggested that Stone felt that Staunton's house was situated too close to the Home Farm and all that that brings, including the farm buildings housing cattle and pigs and other livestock. Also being very close to the coach-house, stables and gardeners accommodation did not appeal. It was also deemed too close to the main road which ran from Havant towards Horndean, which ironically had been moved by Staunton at his own cost a further 200 yards to the other side of the Home Farm in 1828.

Stone after visiting Leigh Park must have been impressed with Leigh Water and probably saw from his first visits the possibilities of a better situation for a new mansion and also a chance to put his mark on the estate.

Richard William Drew

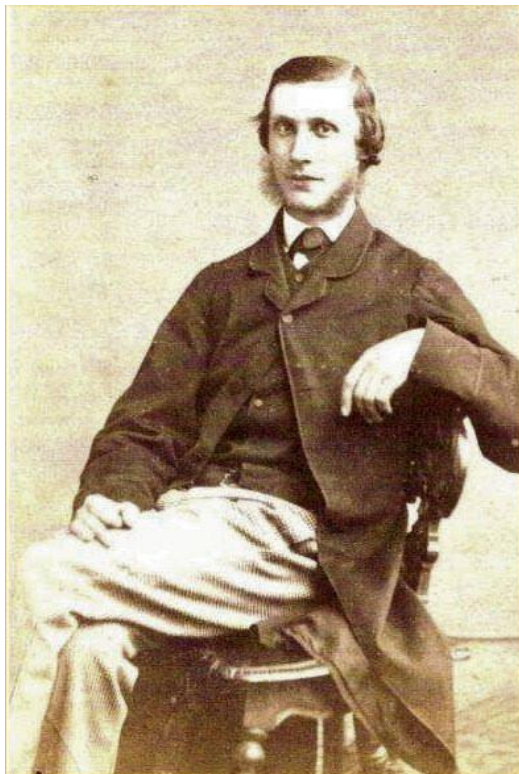
If Stone was the prime mover of the great change at Leigh Park he could not have done it without the help of the architect Richard William Drew, whose large footprints can still be seen at Leigh Park as well as in the neighbourhood of Havant and Bedhampton. As already recorded Stone probably knew Drew from their days at Trinity College, Cambridge, but it is possible that they knew each other before this as they previously lived close to each other at Dulwich and Streatham respectively. There was also a faint and tentative family connection through marriage going back a further two generations on Drew's wife's side to the Helps family. (See family tree and further notes at end of booklet.)

There may also have been a family connection as Drew's brother-in-law was John Helps Starey, and it seems too much of a coincidence that Stone's future father-in-law was Sir Arthur Helps.



HAMBTON, LEIGH PARK, NEAR PORTSMOUTH.—MR. R. W. DREW. ARCHT.

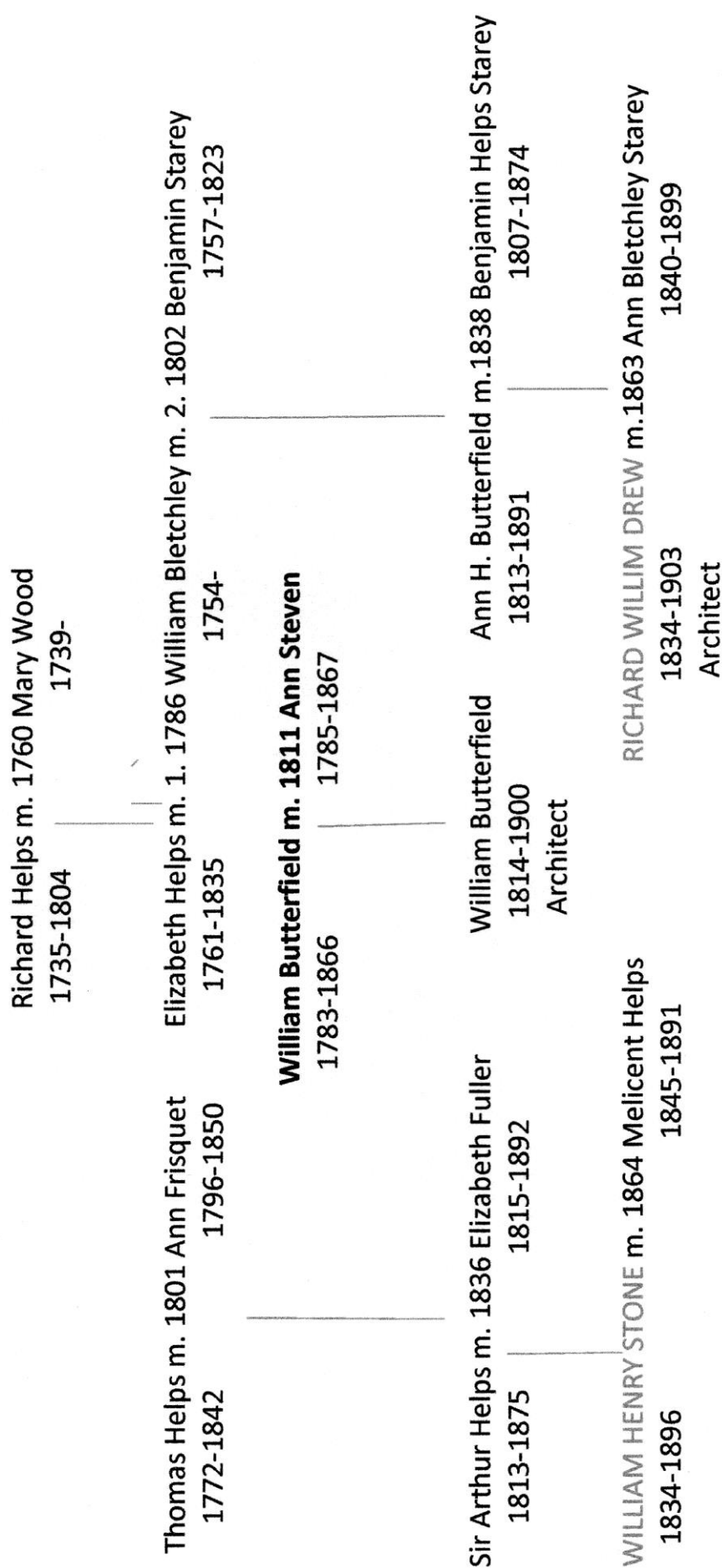
Richard William Drew's drawing of the new mansion, showing the eastern or front elevation



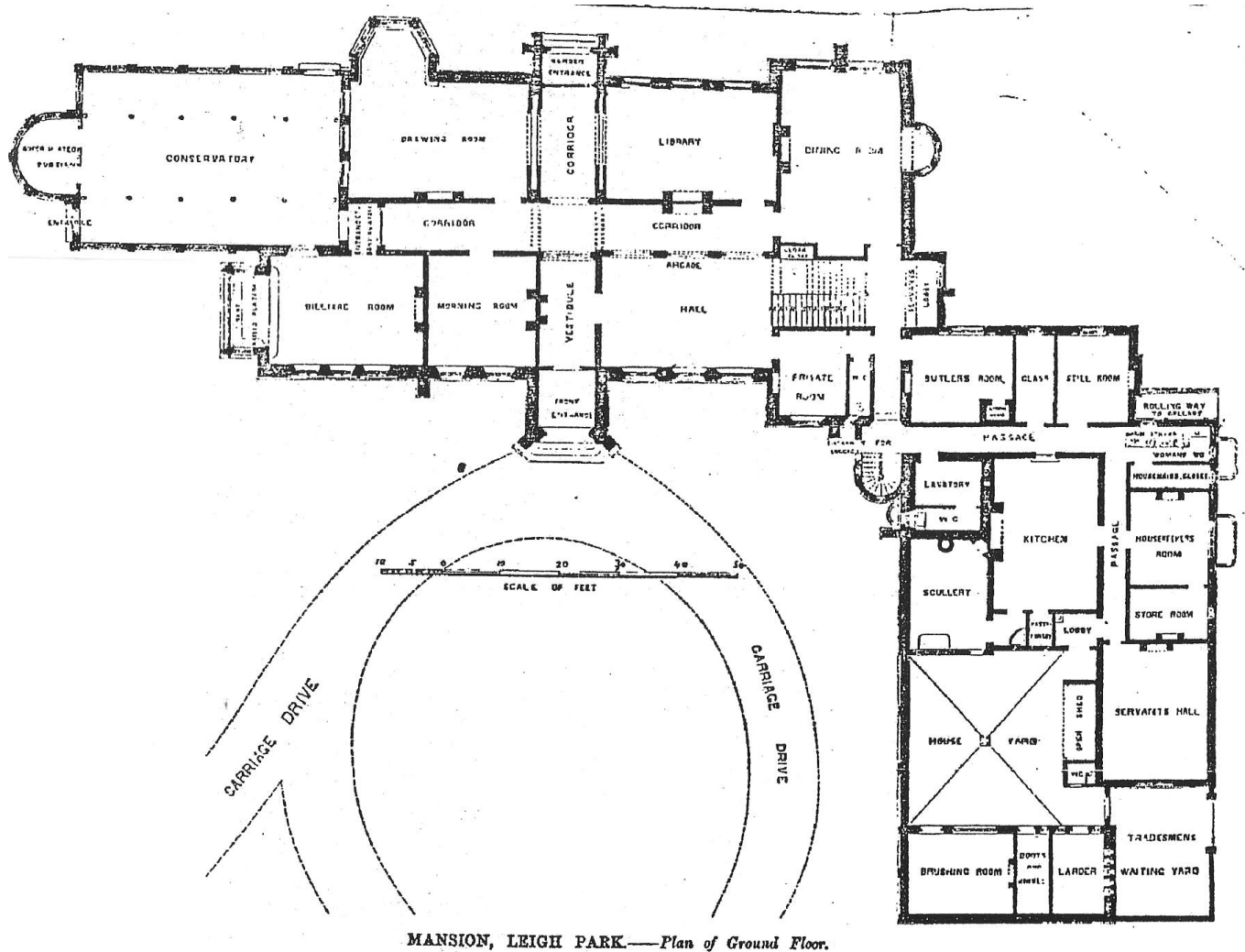
Richard William Drew (1834-1903),
the architect of Leigh Park House

After leaving Cambridge Drew set himself up as an architect and surveyor at 9 Pall Mall in 1860, the first recorded date for him as an architect. His first commissions were additions and repairs to two villas close

THE FAMILY RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WILLIAM HENRY STONE AND RICHARD WILLIAM DREW



to the family home of Leigham Lodge, Streatham, in 1860. These were followed up with designs for new build houses at Streatham through 1861-62 and other projects but Leigh Park would be his first chance of a large scale work. Later Drew would also design other buildings around the estate for Stone, and also other work locally including the Town Hall in Havant, Bedhampton School, and essential restoration work on St Faith's church in 1876 in which Stone was a major benefactor and no doubt put forward Drew's name to be the architect of the project. He would also go on to design other major works including various churches which became his speciality and would again in 1880 design and build another residence for Stone, but more of that later.



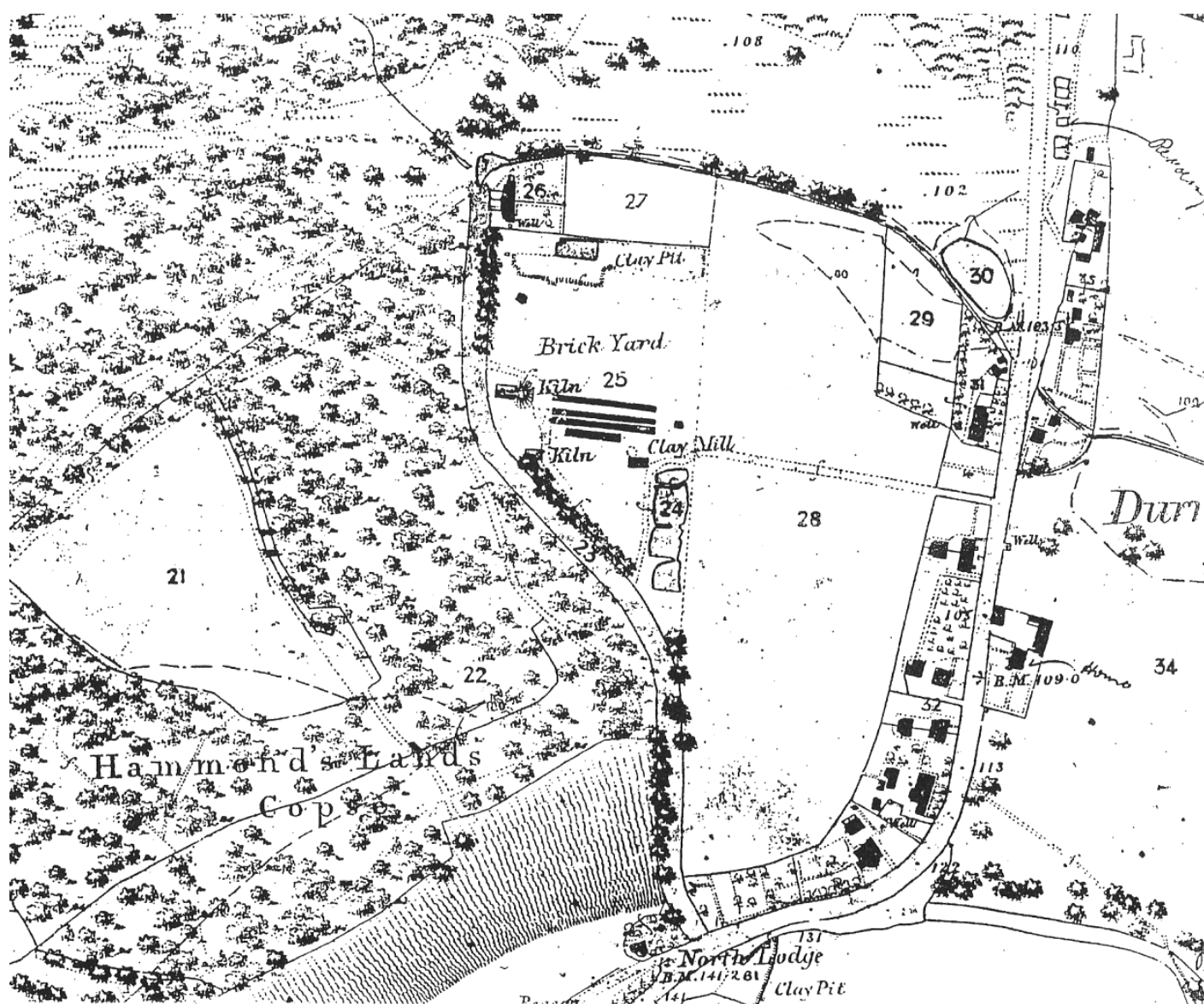
Plan of Leigh Park House from the *Builder Magazine*, 17 March 1866

Work began on the new mansion in the spring of 1863, with the site of Staunton's Temple of Friendship, the Look-out, and the bridge to Temple Lawn being demolished and cleared to make way for the new house. The site picked was the highest point of the estate overlooking Staunton's lake or Leigh Water as it was previously known. Views could be seen of Havant Thicket and beyond and also towards the sea and Hayling Island and the Isle of Wight. New carriage drives were also laid out and other garden features such as the Rosary and Moss House were swept away for this purpose.

The new mansion, although appearing larger than Staunton's house was almost the same size with the same amount of bedrooms but alas only one bathroom. The builders chosen to build the new mansion were Rogers & Booth from Clarence Square, Gosport and 4 Claremont Terrace, Southsea. Rogers & Booth were an established company and among their work were Lumps and Eastney Forts as well as work on Southsea Castle for the defences of Portsmouth. As well as working at Leigh Park they were also building

the County Hospital at Winchester at the same time as Leigh Park. Perhaps their most unusual contract was for the Memorial Church in Constantinople in 1867 in recognition of the Crimean War.

It would appear that Drew and the contractors were keen to use native and some local materials in the building of the mansion and also on other buildings such as the new stables and coach-house and North Lodge which the latter two still survive. Materials used included marble from Devonshire, serpentine, for the more delicate decoration, from the West Country, Farleigh Down Stone from Bath, used for the mouldings, and local chalk from Portsdown Hill used for internal ashlar or finely cut masonry stone. The bricks and tiles used in the construction could not have been more local and were manufactured in the brickyard established for the purpose at the end of Hammonds Lane Copse. It must have been so convenient when a seam of brick clay was found on the estate. Other brickyards had already been established in the neighbourhood nearby before this, especially at Redhill, Havant Thicket, and Rowlands Castle so it could not have been a great surprise. There was a clay-pit, although now the remains of various other pits can still be seen, a clay mill and two kilns. Excavation work in the 1980s found both kilns in situ and large piles of hand-made bricks which would have been used for later building works. The fired bricks were carried by cart down the track to the old North Lodge (built by Sir George Staunton and also known as Durrants Lodge) and then across Beacon Field to the building site.



Part of the 25inch Ordnance Survey map of the Leigh Park Estate, circa 1865, showing the plan of the brickyard used in the construction of Leigh Park House. The plan of the brickyard also shows two cottages at the top of Hammonds Lane, close to the clay-pit, and another track leading to Durrants Road.

Carpenters & Joiners are Wanted
Messrs Rogers & Booth, Gosport
Also Bricklayers wanted at Leigh Park, Havant

Hampshire Telegraph, 16 July 1864

So what of the design of the new mansion? – built in the Gothic style and ‘adapted from the 14th century’ the new mansion was built in mostly red bricks with Farleigh Down stone for the dressings The ashlar work in the hall were of chalk from Portsdown Hill, with shafts of Devonshire marble with a roof of plain tiles. A detached laundry block was built close to the mansion of which the shell of it still survives. The mansion is best described from an article in the *Builder* magazine of 17 March 1866:

Mansion, Leigh Park, near Portsmouth

The inhabitants of Portsmouth and its neighbourhood have long been familiar with the beautiful grounds and conservatories of Leigh Park, through the kind liberality of Mr W.H. Stone, their representative in Parliament. The ungraceful stuccoed building erected on one of the least attractive sites in the Park, which until lately served for the residence, will be remembered.

About three years since the proprietor decided to abandon the old house and build a new residence on a site overlooking the lake and commanding views over the Isle of Wight and some of the most beautiful scenery of the south coast; and in the spring of 1863 the new mansion was commenced. We give a view of the eastern front, showing the principal entrance and the hall, which is carried up the full height of the building. The general arrangement of the principal rooms and offices will be seen on reference to the ground plan; above it are two floors of bedrooms, to which access is given by corridors similar to that on the ground plan. The nurseries are placed over the offices, with which they have a communication independent of the principal and back staircases. The centre portion of the tower is filled with cisterns for the supply of hot and cold water, which are carried to all parts of the building.

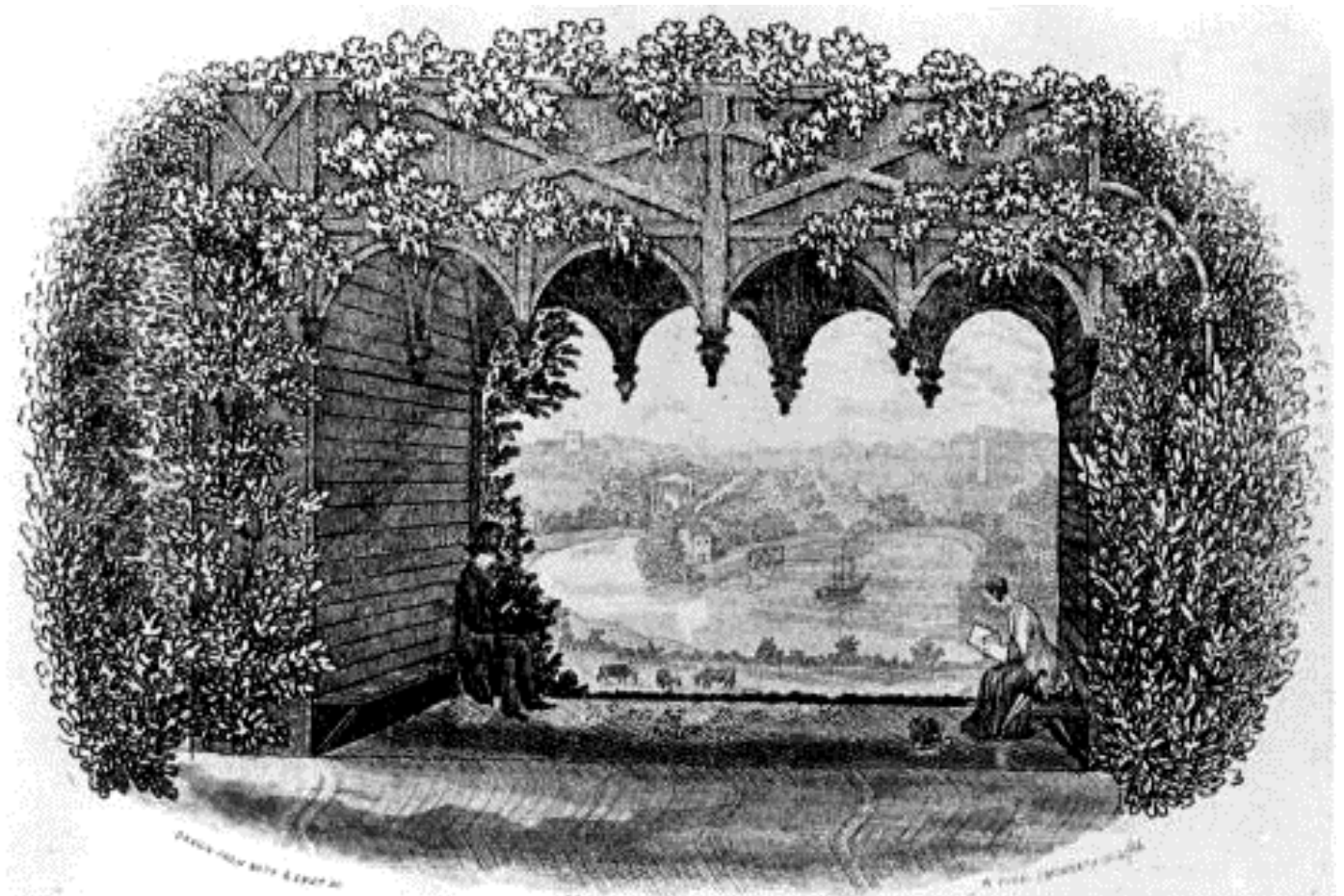
The materials used for the walls are red bricks, and Farleigh Down stone for the dressings. The roof is covered with plain tiles; both bricks and tiles being made on the estate. The arcades and ashlar work in the hall are of chalk from Portsdown Hill, with shafts of Devonshire marble. As much as possible throughout the building native materials have been used, the chimney pieces being of serpentine, alabaster, or Devonshire marble.

At present the house is approached from the old entrance on the Portsmouth-road; but it is intended to form a new one near to Rowland's Castle. The house is warmed throughout on the hot-water system by Messrs Weeks.

The work has been carried out by Messrs Rogers & Booth, contractors, of Gosport, from the designs of Mr R.W. Drew, of Storey's Gate, Westminster.



The Temple '*Parentibus et Amices defunctis sacrum*', 28 January 1830. To the left is Temple Bridge, site of William Stone's Leigh Park House. This was the first of a series of paintings of Leigh Park by Joseph Francis Gilbert commissioned by Sir George Staunton Bt.



The Look-out from a print of 1854 overlooking Leigh Water, the site of Leigh Park House.

The new house was probably ready for occupation at the end of 1865 and Stone and his new wife Melicent either lived in Staunton's home until the new property was ready or at Casino House at Dulwich which was still under the tenure of William Stone. It may have been the case the pair lived at Dulwich to escape all the building work going on at Leigh Park and moved into the new house when it was complete. It is also known that prior to May 1864 when he returned to England Stone had been on a European tour, although the duration of this tour is unknown.

The coach-house and stables, which still stand on Durrants Road/Petersfield Road, *'were erected simultaneously with the Mansion, and were in character therewith, they were conveniently situate within two or three minutes walk, and screened by well grown trees.'* The new North Lodge, built opposite the Staunton Arms public house, has a date of 1868 in brick work on the side of the building and was completed after the main building work. This lodge acted as an entrance to a carriage drive which wound its way through the copses and woodlands to the house, an easier access coming from the London Road.

The new North Lodge was the only lodge Stone built, the remaining lodges of Staunton's era remained and were still the main entrances into the estate, one or two disappearing as late as the early 1950s. Luckily, Stone's lodge remains, although now enlarged, the original building still gives us a glimpse of what the mansion would have looked like, as can be seen from the photograph below dating from 1990s before a modern extension was built onto the back of the building.



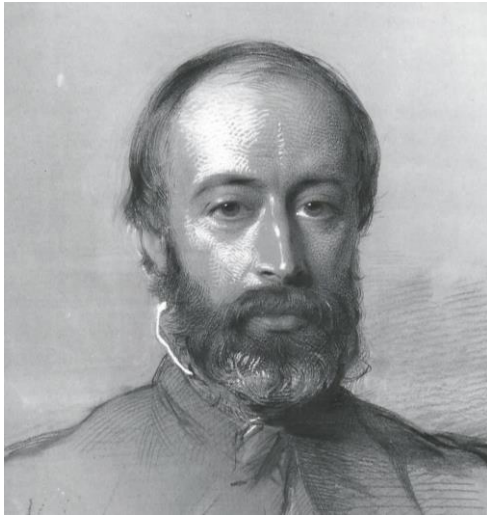
North Lodge, photographed circa 1992

Marriage and Family

While all the work was being carried out at Leigh Park on the 2 November 1864 at St Peter's Church, Bishops Waltham, William Henry Stone married Melicent Helps, the second daughter of Arthur and Elizabeth Helps of Vernon Hill House, Bishops Waltham. As one historian has noted that during the building work:

Stone must have made periodic visits to Vernon Hill House, named after Admiral Vernon, who captured Porto Bello in 1739 with the loss of only seven men. The house, just north of Bishop's Waltham, about 23 miles north of Leigh Park was now the home of Arthur Helps and his family, of whom the most attractive member, in Stone's eyes, was the second daughter Melicent.

Leigh Park: A 19th Century Pleasure Ground, Derek Gladwyn, 1992



Sir Arthur Helps, C.B., K.C.B. (1813-1875)
by George Richmond, 1858

Arthur Helps was born in Balham Hill, Surrey, on 10 July 1813, the fourth and youngest son of Thomas, a London merchant, alderman, and treasurer of St Bartholomew's Hospital. He was educated at Eton College and at Trinity College, Cambridge, the same college as his future son-in-law, where he graduated BA in 1835 as thirty-first wrangler, taking his MA in 1839. On 27 October 1836 he married Elizabeth, youngest daughter of Captain Edward Fuller of co. Kerry, Ireland. Shortly after graduation he became private secretary to the Chancellor of the Exchequer in Melbourne's administration, Thomas Spring Rice (later Lord Monteagle), the father of one of Helps's Cambridge friends. In 1843, partially through an inheritance from his father, Helps purchased the large estate of 3,000 acres, Vernon Hill at Bishop's Waltham which he resided at until 1869 when the estate had to be sold due to financial worries.

As an essayist and private secretary to other notable persons he had been noticed by Lord Palmerston who had once offered him the Chair of Modern History at Oxford but on 9 June 1860 on the recommendation of Lord Granville offered him the post of Clerk to the Privy Council, which he accepted and held to the end of his life. This brought him into close association with the royal family as well as Gladstone and Disraeli when prime ministers. He had known the prince consort sufficiently well to select and edit his *Speeches* (1862), to which he added an introductory appreciation. His most important royal assignment was to edit extracts from the queen's journal, published in 1868 as *Leaves from the Journal of our Life in the Highlands*. There was at times considerable tension between author and editor, especially over one note concerning John Brown, the queen's gillie. When Prince Albert died in 1861 Helps wrote a memorial notice, as he did later for Palmerston, Charles Dickens and Charles Kingsley. Kingsley along with other notables such as Thomas Carlyle visited Helps at Vernon Hill House.

On 20 June 1871 he was made CB; and on 12 July 1872 KCB and knighted by Queen Victoria. The honorary degree of DCL was conferred on him by Oxford University in 1864. In 1869 he was forced to sell Vernon Hill, after losing money in a scheme to develop a pottery industry at Bishop's Waltham with plans to rival the great Staffordshire potteries and was defrauded by his agents. He moved his family to a house at Kew provided by Queen Victoria. Helps died of pleurisy at 13 Lower Berkeley Street, London, on 7 March 1875, having earlier contracted a chill during a levee of the Prince of Wales.

Stone was very close to Helps, perhaps seeing him even as a father figure, after-all Stone was only 23 when his father died and it may have been the case that Helps gave him advice during the building of Leigh Park House. At around the same time Stone was building Leigh Park a bed of clay was found on the Vernon Hill Estate which was ideal for manufacturing a hard brick and terra-cotta work. It is believed that Stone played a part financially in the new project which became the Bishop's Waltham Clay Company and it may have been that some terra-cotta designs were used on the new mansion at Leigh Park. Helps built houses for his workers at Newtown and was influential in a number of projects which benefitted the town of Bishop's Waltham but as we have already seen the project ended disastrously with Helps having to sell his estate and except a grace and favour house from the Queen in 1869.

A year after moving into the new house at Leigh Park Melicent fell pregnant and on 5 February 1866 a son, Arthur William was born, not at Leigh Park but at Casino House at Dulwich. It would appear that after the birth of Arthur Melicent fell ill but made a complete recovery. On 4 September 1868 a daughter Melicent, named after her mother, was born at Leigh Park and baptised at St Faith's church in Havant on 22 October 1868. These two new arrivals must have kept the new nurseries in the house at Leigh Park busy.

William Stone MP – 1865 Election for the Borough of Portsmouth

Stone was a staunch Liberal in his political views and as soon as he returned to Leigh Park in March 1864 from his travels abroad he made contact with the Portsmouth Liberal Association. Leigh Park of course had a history of political representation with Sir George Staunton representing Portsmouth as a Liberal for fourteen years until his retirement in 1852. Interestingly, Sir Francis Baring, who retired as member for Portsmouth before the 1865 election, which brought Stone into Parliament, had been Staunton's co-elected member for Portsmouth and also its member since 1826.

In May 1864 Stone put himself forward as a candidate in the upcoming election which would take place on 12 July 1865. The Borough of Portsmouth sent two representatives to parliament and as well as the retiring Sir Francis Baring the other sitting member being the Conservative Sir James Elphinstone who won the 1857 election. The local press, which covered every aspect of the Portsmouth electoral news, carried Stone's candidature which was followed by his address to the voters of the Borough of Portsmouth:

The Representation of Portsmouth

We are authorised to state that William Henry Stone, Esq., of Leigh Park, near Havant, will offer himself as a candidate for the representation of Portsmouth at the next dissolution of Parliament, in the place of Sir F.T. Baring. Mr Stone will come forward in the Liberal interest, and we believe he will prove to be a worthy successor of the Right Hon. Baronet who has announced his intention to retire after 38 years of faithful service, Mr Stone has much to recommend him to this constituency. In the first place his principles are right. He is a liberal in the true sense of the term. Although, if returned, he would go to Parliament as an avowed supporter of Lord Palmerston's Administration he will not pledge himself to support all the acts of that or other governments, and this reservation is consistent with a spirit of independence which is highly commendable. He is an advocate of religious toleration and would extend the franchise in proportion to the growing intelligence of those who may qualify themselves for the exercise of this privilege. As regards the foreign policy of the nation he approves non-intervention so far – and only so far – as it is consistent with our national honour. In the second place, Mr Stone is a gentleman and scholar. He was diligent enough to obtain a double-first class at Cambridge, and now enjoys the distinction of a Fellowship of Trinity College in that University. That

he is not unacquainted with public life may be inferred from the fact that he has been on the commission of the peace for the county of Surrey for the last four years and has taken an active part in the public business of the county. And in the third place, Mr Stone is a neighbour, Some time ago he purchased the estate of our late respected member Sir George Staunton, and is now having built for his own use a large mansion upon the site of the old edifice, - a fact which promises that he would frequently be amongst us, and thus be enabled to judge of the requirements of the borough and to aid us in a variety of ways which would be impossible to a gentleman having no personal interest in the locality, and whose visits would only be casual and uncertain. Mr Stone has only recently returned from the Continent, but we have authority for stating that he will take an early opportunity of addressing the electors and of enlarging the circle of his friends in the borough.

Hampshire Telegraph, Saturday 7 May 1864

This was followed three days later by Stone's address from Leigh Park which outlined his political views such as his staunch advocacy of religious toleration and his favour to non-intervention in regard to relations with foreign countries:

TO THE ELECTORS OF THE BOROUGH OF PORTSMOUTH

Gentlemen, -

Your respective member, Sir Francis Baring, having decided shortly to retire from Parliament, I take the first opportunity, upon my return to England from a foreign tour, of declaring my intention to offer myself as a candidate for the representation of your Borough at the next Election.

In taking this step, I have the sanction of numerous influential members of your body, and I look with confidence for the support of the Liberal Electors of Portsmouth. Though personally unknown to many of you, I venture to hope that, residing as I do in your immediate neighbourhood, I may not be considered even now as altogether a stranger, and that I may have frequent opportunities of becoming better known among you. My political principles are Liberal; and if, honoured with a seat in Parliament, I shall give a general, but independent, support to Lord Palmerston's government. I am in favour of a gradual extension of the suffrage to all persons qualified to make an intelligent and independent use of the privilege.

I am an advocate of religious toleration, in the fullest sense of the phrase, and as a warm friend of the Established Church, I hold that her true interests require a liberal policy, alike towards her own members and those who differ from her. I consider that the continuance of peace will be best secured by the maintenance of our naval and military defences in a high state of efficiency. Consistently with this object I advocate the greatest possible economy in our public expenditure, with a view especially to the diminution of those burdens which press heavily upon the poorer classes, or hamper the operation of commerce. In our relations with foreign countries I am in favour of a policy of non-intervention, to the fullest extent compatible with the honour of our country as a first-class power.

I hope to have an early opportunity of giving you a fuller explanation of my views, and of answering any enquiries which you may think proper to address me.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant

W.H. STONE

Leigh Park, 11 May, 1864

Hampshire Telegraph, 14 May 1864

Stone's appointment as a candidate in the next election was met with enthusiasm as the report in the *Hampshire Telegraph* for the 4 June 1864 testifies:

Appointment of William Henry Stone to Represent the Borough of Portsmouth

MR. WILLIAM HENRY STONE – We are justified in saying that the reception which was accorded to Mr Stone on Monday evening last more than satisfied his most sanguine expectations. He was received as cordially, and the proceedings were as enthusiastic, as if we were on the eve of a contested election, and had amongst us a long-trying and familiar friend. We had the gratifying assurance that Liberalism is not dead in Portsmouth, and that the representative men of our borough are not labouring under the delusion that it is perfectly immaterial whether we have a nominee of the Carlton Club or a gentleman of liberal views who is untrammelled by the restraints of party, and who is free to act according to the dictates of an instructed intelligence. In Mr Stone the Liberals of Portsmouth have, we believe, found a worthy successor to Sir Francis Baring, and that is as great a compliment as could possibly be paid to a young man in the springtime, indeed in any other period, of public life. Great as was the promise, we have no hesitation in saying that it was no more than realised in the performance of Mr Stone's first essay before a Portsmouth audience. We knew that he was a man of good social position, of affluence, and of education; but we scarcely expected to find that he had made such practical use of his opportunities as we have evidenced by the able, comprehensive, and lucid speech which he addressed to the electors and non-electors of Portsmouth on Monday last. Mr Stone's speech was not only comprehensive in its scope but it was essentially practical in its purpose. It carried with it the conviction that he was not "crammed" for the occasion. He talked upon a variety of questions which engage the attention of politicians, and showed that he knew what he was talking about. He has travelled with his eyes open; he has read much, and, what is better still, he has thought deeply. There is in him something more than the germ of a high standard of excellence. Above all it is impossible for his hearers to be otherwise than convinced of his thorough honesty, and any modern Diogenes, in search of an honest politician may find in him what he has been seeking after. Mr Stone is not prepared to "go the whole hog," and to promise every conceivable thing which is possible or impossible for the mere purpose of satisfying every extravagant demand that may be made upon him. He very wisely refused to state his opinions in detail upon debatable questions with that dogmatic certainty which would imply a foregone conclusion incapable of any modification that might be rendered necessary by the exigencies of time and circumstance. But the groundwork of his political faith is right. He lays down the broad principles of political economy with perfect clearness and with a logical consistency which shows a clear head and deeply-rooted conviction, and the hearty demonstration which followed the conclusion of his address was satisfactory to Mr Stone as it was credible to the good sense of his audience. It occupies too much of our space here to give anything like a faithful summary of Mr Stone's speech, and we will therefore refer simply to its more salient features. First of all, then, he explains very clearly the philosophy of good government. He emphatically claims the name of a Liberal, and by that he means a man who regulates his opinions mainly by two great principles. The first is that no good government can be carried on according to the constitution of human affairs without judicious and well-timed progress, - a man who neither desires change nor fears it, but who holds that it is a necessary ingredient in all well-established communities. Secondly, that a government should be carried on for the advantage of the governed as a whole, and not for aggrandisement of one man or set of men. Starting from this basis he exposed the fallacy of the so-called Conservative reaction, but admitted that owing entirely to the negligence and carelessness of the Liberals, and not to any actual extension of the principles of conservatism, the Conservatives have gained a certain amount of ground, and he might have referred

to such towns as Brighton, Southampton and Leicester in proof of the hollowness of this Conservative reaction. The fact is that if there is but little difference between the Conservatives and Liberals of the present day it is because the principles of old Toryism and its equivalent, old fogeyism, are dead.

There has been a gradual, but sure, conversion to the new faith which has produced such wonderful results in England during the last 20 years, and hence the Conservatives of the present day would have been the rank Liberals of twenty or thirty years ago. And if the great principles of political, social, and commercial advances are to continue their work to the end, they must be put into operation by the men who have faith in their ability; and who are not Liberals merely because the profession of Liberalism is a stepping-stone to place and power. We believe, with Mr Stone, that: If the Conservatives should become well-established they will either introduce a system of reaction and make a determined stand against all necessary improvements, or if they feel their power uncertain, they will make a sort of grotesque parody of Liberal measure which will be more dangerous to the country than if they adhered to their own principles. – (cheers). – A Conservative Government carrying out Liberal measures is like a man unused to riding placed upon a spirited horse – he is sure to be thrown sooner or later; but while on the horse, he may be carried further than he intends, injure the animal, and inflict no little mischief on the by-standers.

Mr Stone very satisfactorily explains his views with respect to the franchise and summed up by observing that if such a man as Mr Gladstone would exercise his great powers of mind in producing some well-balanced and statesman-like measure, which should extend the suffrage to an additional class of voters without entirely endangering the independence of those who already have the privilege, and which should be endowed by the great Liberal party, he would be found in the foremost ranks of its supporters. Mr Stone has no faith in the supreme virtues of the ballot-box, although he does not apprehend that mischief which is sometimes predicted of it; and if any constituency considered it to be necessary for its protection he would not oppose a trial of the experiment. And then we have his views on taxation, and upon church-rates, which he opposes mainly because it is an undignified spectacle to see the Church endeavouring to exhort what persons are unwilling to pay, and because he believes that the existence of a compulsory law hinders the development of the voluntary system. He intimated his approval of the foreign policy of Her Majesty's Government, and while admitting that some mistakes have been made, expressed his belief that ministers have given practical effect to the views entertained by the country generally. Upon the question of neutrality we are essentially a practical people, and we are only willing to interfere with other nations when a palpable wrong is being inflicted, or when some real advantage is to be gained by our interference.

We must, therefore, he urged be contented to bear what reproaches may be cast upon us; and if, in spite of our wishes, wrong is done and we are unable to redress it, we have still the redemption that there is a Supreme Arbitrator of national events, who has the power, when the proper time comes, to punish the oppressor and to liberate the victim. After touching upon a variety of other questions Mr Stone very briefly referred to matters of local interest. He did not attempt to obtain the support of his audience by making all sorts of extravagant promises, but he honestly avowed that he should be the last person to maintain his own private interests, or those of any place with which he might be connected, at the expense of the country at large.

But, he adds, I must remember at the same time that the welfare of the country at large is made up of the welfare of separate communities; and I must remember also; from the constitution of human nature, that unless a person looks out sharply for himself he is not likely to find one to look out for him. – (laughter and cheers). If a borough can look to its members, it will stand a much better chance in the scramble of life, – (laughter) – and, therefore, as a resident in your neighbourhood, and as your

member, if you elect me, I should consider myself wanting in my duty, and unfit for my position, if I failed to promote what I think to be fair for the best interests of this place. – (loud cheers).

Mr Stone has now formally introduced himself to this constituency and the electors have a fair opportunity of judging of his merits. He has wealth, position, education, and leisure, a clear head, and we believe a honest heart, to recommend him. He comes amongst us as a free and independent gentleman and not as a nominee of the Carlton Club or any other political party. He lives amongst us and is, therefore, more or less personally concerned in the prosperity of the locality, and it would, moreover, not be necessary to send to Logie-Elphinstone or any other remote place on this or the other side of the Tweed, if prompt communication with our member was desirable. But, above all, he is a disciple of the true political faith whose works have been accomplished so much for us as a nation. We have only to add that if the Liberals of Portsmouth are true to themselves and to their cause, they will have the satisfaction of returning Mr Stone at the head of the poll and placing him in a position which he is in every respect qualified to fill.

Hampshire Telegraph, 4 June 1864

From this date it was over a year until the election, time enough for Stone to impress the voters of Portsmouth and for them to decide he was an able man to replace Sir Francis Baring. As the above article suggests: *'In Mr Stone the Liberals of Portsmouth have, we believe, found a worthy successor to Sir Francis Baring, and that is as great a compliment as could possibly be paid to a young man in the springtime, indeed in any other period, of public life.'*

One other factor Stone had in his favour was that he was now a local man, the sitting member for Portsmouth, Sir James Dalrymple-Horn-Elphinstone Bart., to give him his full name, resided at Logie-Elphinstone in Aberdeenshire, a fact that did not always go down to well with the Portsmouth voters.



Sir James Dalrymple-Horn-Elphinstone Bt
Caricature by 'Spy', Vanity Fair, 1878



Sir Francis Baring Bt (Lord Northbrook)
By Sir George Hayter, circa 1833

Perhaps a word on Sir Francis Baring would not go amiss - during his political career, which started in 1826 and ended with his retirement in 1865 he only sat for the Borough of Portsmouth. He joined the cabinet as Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1839, serving until the fall of the Melbourne government in August 1841. He returned to the cabinet in January 1849, replacing Lord Auckland as First Lord of the

Admiralty in Russell's cabinet, until its fall in 1852. He was created Baron Northbrook 4 January 1866 and died on 6 September 1866 at his home Stratton Park. Micheldever, Hampshire. His obituary in the *Daily Telegraph* was written by Sir Arthur Helps.

The election was called for the 12 July 1865 giving Stone and his Liberal colleague Stephen Gaselee plenty of time for canvassing and prepare for the campaign. Stephen Gaselee had unsuccessfully contested the 1855 election at Portsmouth and this election was his second chance. He was since 1840 sergeant-at-law, a leading barrister, and son of Sir Stephen Gaselee, a British judge and justice of the Court of Common Pleas. The family it is believed originated from Portsmouth.

The result of the election was a victory by Stone with Gaselee second and Elphinstone third with the Hon. James Bruce in fourth place:

Stone 2164 Gaselee 2103 Elphinstone 1677 Bruce 1559

Again the *Hampshire Telegraph* recorded the election in its pages and it is best left to them to describe the Election Day itself and the declaration of the poll:

The Election – Portsmouth, 12 July 1865

The polling commenced at Portsmouth with great spirit in the various districts at eight o'clock on Wednesday morning. The Liberal candidates took the lead from the commencement, and at nine o'clock Mr Serjeant Gaselee was 134 and Mr Stone 132 in advance of their Tory opponents. At ten the Liberal majority had increased, although the Tories had during the hour used their best exertions to bring their friends to the poll. At eleven the Tory chance was slight indeed. One ray of hope was left – that during the “dinner-hour” the dockyard men might come to the rescue. But the hope was delusive! The dockyard men were no longer to be deceived by Tory promises; and the support of Sir James Elphinstone and the Hon. Mr Bruce received from that quarter was but small, for it was difficult to determine on what grounds the Tory candidates possessed such superior claims, as they alleged on the artisans in Her Majesty's dockyard. The Tories grew desperate; and with their usual candour, issued false accounts of the state of the poll, in the hope of catching a few stray voters who were unable to detect the deception, and hiding the defeat to which it was certain they must ultimately submit. Each hour the Liberal success became more marked; and at four the constituency of Portsmouth not only expressed in unmistakable terms its opinion of the policy of the Liberal Administration which has been productive of such immense benefits to the country, but administered to the enemies of the Government such a rebuke as they have never received in this borough. The utmost vigour has been manifested by both parties during the election; and the Tory defeat is, therefore, the more significant. A number of pugilistic encounters took place in Grigg-street during the afternoon, which were originated by a party of “roughs”, led by one “Byng”, a prize fighter retained by the Conservatives; but the disturbances were comparatively few, although intense excitement prevailed. We subjoin the state of the poll, as issued by the Liberal Committee, the approximate accuracy of which was guaranteed by Mr Alderman Scale:-

Nine O'Clock

Gaselee 275

Stone.....273

Elphinstone....141

Bruce.....133

Four O'Clock : State of The Poll

Gaselee.....2060

Stone.....2130

Elphinstone.....1648

Bruce.....1554

Majority for Gaselee: 412

Majority for Stone: 482

Mr Edgcombe announced the numbers before a large audience at the Crown Rooms, amidst deafening cheers. Mr Stone was loudly called for, and was received with immense enthusiasm. He said – Gentlemen I shall not detain you very long at the present time, but shall meet you tomorrow at the hustings, and shall then have an opportunity of thanking you for the glorious which you have enabled us to achieve, and of thanking our Committee and supporters for working so nobly as they have done on our behalf. – (Great cheering). – We have won such a victory as the town of Portsmouth has not won for many years. – (Great cheering).

Mr Serjeant Gaselee, who was also received with intense enthusiasm, said: Gentlemen there is no mistake today. – (cheers). – The unmistakable voice of the people has contradicted the extraordinary decision of yesterday. – (Great cheering). – Tory malice, Tory lies, Tory magistrates, Tory intimidation, Tory bribery, Tory corruption have all sunk before the majesty of the people. – (immense cheering). – You have won a victory which will resound throughout the length and breadth of the land. – (cheers). – I rejoice that you have returned Mr Stone and myself; and I rejoice the more that you have given an impulse to the Liberal cause which will turn other elections in England. – (cheers). – Gentlemen I thank you from the bottom of my heart. I occupy the proud position to which I have for years aspired – (cheers) – and which I was determined I would obtain because the Tories said I should not. – (cheers). – Gentlemen, I think I shall best consult your feelings by saying no more today except that I thank you most cordially for the support you have given me, and for the union you have displayed and I hope you have given the Tories such a defeat that we shall not hear from them again for 20 years. – (Great cheering).

Mr Edgcombe (who was also greatly cheered) said – Gentlemen, - we have won a victory under the guidance of our old and trusted friend (Mr Scale). We are indebted to him for the kind and courteous manner in which he has given us the benefit of his wisdom and experience and I beg to propose that we tender to him our hearty thanks. – (Great cheering).

Mr Stone – I have much pleasure in seconding the motion. You know Mr Scale much better than I do at present, but to his continued, judicious, and zealous exertions we are greatly indebted for the triumph we have achieved this day. – (cheers).

Mr Alderman Scale (who was enthusiastically cheered) said: Gentlemen, - When did me the honour of putting me into the position of Chairman of the united committee of Sejeant Gaselee and Mr Stone, I must confess that I trembled under the the responsibility which you imposed upon me. I now would add that it has been a fair fight for the representaion of the borough of Portsmouth. I have done what little I could to ensure a successful result; but if it had not been for your kindness, and the zealous manner in which you have worked, no exertions of mine would have carried such a triumph, and, therefore, gentlemen, I have to thank you for your co-operation in this good cause. – (Great cheering).

Owing to the great excitement which prevailed at the close of the poll, the successful candidates were advised not to make any public appearances on Wednesday last, more especially as a section of the mob had already resorted to violence by throwing missiles, not only at the candidates themselves, but

also at the Chairman of the Liberal Committee, Mr Alderman Scale, who received a blow on the side of the face when passing the Sussex Hotel. When driving through Common Hard Mr Lush and Mr Taplin were violently assaulted and dragged upon the ground by a gang of ruffians, and an eye glass belonging to the latter gentleman was stolen from him.

Declaration of the Poll – 13 July 1865

The declaration of the poll was made at the hustings on Thursday morning.

On the left of the Mayor were Messrs. Serjeant Gaselee and W.H. Stone, with a large number of Liberal electors; and on the right Sir James D.H. Elphinstone and the Hon. Thomas C. Bruce, with a number of their supporters. A large concourse of visitors assembled on the square, who cheered most heartily upon the appearance of the successful candidates.

The Mayor said the election of two burgesses to represent this borough in Parliament, in accordance with the commands of Her Majesty, had been concluded; and it was his duty, - and the last which he shall perform in disposing of what had occupied his attention during the last few days, - to declare the result of the poll, which was as follows:-

William Henry Stone, Esq.....2,164

Stephen Gaselee, Esq.....2,103

Sir James Elphinstone. Bart....1,677

The Hon. Thomas Bruce.....1,559

The announcement was received with enthusiastic and continued cheering, at the conclusion of which the Mayor observed that such being the state of the poll, it was his duty to declare that William Henry Stone, Esq., and Stephen Gaselee Esq., were properly and legally returned as the representatives of this borough in Parliament. – (Great cheering, mingled with hisses and groans).

William Stone's Address

Mr Stone, who was loudly cheered, then addressed the electors. He confessed that he felt the importance of the position in which he found himself by the greatness of the honour which they had conferred upon him. – (cheers). – He could scarcely yet sufficiently realise the the importance of the dignity to which they had raised him; but he felt that to be a representative of a place of this importance, to be chosen by a large number of those who constituted the electoral body in this borough, was one of the highest and proudest positions to which any man could be raised. – (cheers). – When he further considered that he came here as an unknown man, and that they had in such an unmistakable manner elected him, he felt that the trust reposed in him was very great, and one which should command his earnest consideration. – (cheers). He felt also, as he had again and again said, that their duty was not so much to represent a particular section of the people as to legislate upon the broad principle which had gathered then together that day; and as their decision was in support of that principle, he only hoped and trusted they would not find him an unworthy exponent of it. – (loud and continued cheering). – He felt that he was called upon to thank all his supporters for the energy and perseverance they had displayed throughout the contest, the successful result of which had been entirely brought about by the unity which had prevailed in the Liberal ranks. – (cheers). – It was impossible, however, for him to adequately express to them his thanks, and he would simply therefore assure the whole body of electors in the borough that he would continue to support those broad Liberal principles, the truths of which Portsmouth had now recognised, and he would endeavour to do so to their satisfaction. - (cheers). – He hoped that from that time forth they would forget what

differences of opinion had existed, and consider their representatives, not as the exponents of any particular section of this great constituency, but as representing the interests of the whole borough. – (cheers). – Whatever difference of opinion they might have entertained upon minor questions of politics he was sure they would forget them, and that in discharging the duty reposed in them as representatives they would study the interests of the country at large as well as the individual interest of this town or any particular section of it. – (cheers). – It was a constitutional right that when a contest of this description closed, the minority should acquiesce in the decision of the majority, and if they were disposed, as he thought they were, to do that, then they would at once forget any unpleasant feeling which had been aroused during the heat of the contest. – (cheers). – If, during the last few weeks, anything had fallen from his lips, or had been done or said by those who had advocated his cause which was calculated to give offence, he now most sincerely apologised for it. – (cheers). – He was pleased that they had been raised to the exalted position of representatives as free and independent men. – (cheers). – They had not been pledged on any question, but had been chosen on those broad principles from which he had from time to time referred; and he could only say, in conclusion, that he hoped they would find that their confidence had not been misplaced, and that the time would never come when they would have occasion to regret the choice which they had now made. – (enthusiastic cheering).

Mr Stone said they were now very nearly at the close of this great contest, but there was a gentleman standing amongst them who had had the most arduous duties to perform during the last few days. It must be a matter of relief to him to know that this contest, which had excited such warm feelings, had nevertheless passed off in a manner so credible to the people. – (cheers). Notwithstanding the strong party feeling manifested throughout he was pleased to say that there had been no positive breach of the public peace to necessitate the interference of the police, and he could not help thinking that that result was entirely owing to the judicious conduct of their chief magistrate. He therefore proposed that a hearty vote of thanks be given to their worthy mayor for his impartial and judicious conduct throughout this election. (cheers).

Sir James Elphinstone briefly seconded the motion which was carried with acclamation.

The Mayor, in returning thanks said he was glad to know that the inhabitants of Portsmouth had conducted themselves as he thought they would conduct themselves during such a contest. He entreated them all to return to their various avocations to forget all little differences of opinion, to work together for their own individual interest and for the common welfare of the borough. – (cheers).

Three hearty cheers were then given for the Queen, and the proceedings were brought to a close.

The new members were then driven through some of the principle thoroughfares in the borough to the Portland Hotel, being preceded by outriders, and escorted by a long train of carriages of all descriptions.

Hampshire Telegraph, 15 July 1864

Leigh Park was once again the home of a sitting member of Parliament, and it would not be last time. Sir Francis Baring, the retiring member, who would sadly die the following year, was pleased with the result, writing to his daughter Mary:

The result at Portsmouth has given me much pleasure – and I am sorry to admit that I am glad Sir James Elphinstone has been put out, and more than any other Conservative; for he has done much

mischievous at Portsmouth, and lowered the feeling of the constituency. Up to his appearance there the fight was about public questions; he and his friends raised the cry of "How much money can your member get for you?"

Leigh Park: A 19th Century Pleasure Ground, Derek Gladwyn, 1992

Four days after the election victory, Stone then back at Leigh Park, was presented with a congratulatory address by the inhabitants of Havant. This coincided with a procession from Stockheath Lane at the junction of West Street (now Staunton Road) in Havant and a march headed by the band of 4th Hants (Havant) Rifle Volunteer Corps to the centre of town, presumably close to the crossroads and St Faith's church. The previous day, Friday the 16 July, had been deemed a public holiday in the neighbourhood to celebrate Stone's victory and almost every house in the town was decorated with flags and banners.

Replying to the address read out by Charles John Longcroft, the Steward of the manor of Havant as well as Clerk to the magistrates, Stone thanked the local people of Havant for their valued support. But one incident soured the occasion and the electoral victory and this was in regard to a matter more close to home – the enclosure of Havant Thicket, which certain local inhabitants were not entirely happy with but which we will look at in more detail later. The *Hampshire Telegraph* in its usual manner recorded the occasion, again in its unswerving backing of the Liberal cause, a fact that it carried through the whole of the election process:

Havant: Presentation of A Congratulatory Address to W.H. Stone, Esq., M.P.

If to the majority of the electors of Portsmouth the return to Parliament of William Henry Stone, Esq., of Leigh Park, were a source of satisfaction, it was no less gratifying to the inhabitants of Havant and the surrounding district where he is well-known as a kind landlord, a generous neighbour, and an estimable man. On retiring from the busy scenes incident to the severe contest in which he had been engaged, Mr Stone received the warm congratulations of his numerous friends; but the inhabitants of the quiet little town in the immediate neighbourhood of Leigh Park felt that some public demonstration was the only fitting manner in which they could manifest their gratification at the success of their respected neighbour. It was accordingly resolved that Friday (yesterday) should be observed as a general holiday. About one o'clock the whole of the shops were closed, and the inhabitants left their places of business to take part in the proceedings. Almost every house in the town was decorated with flags, banners, and floral devices of various kinds; and the streets presented a very picturesque appearance. At a quarter to three o'clock a number of the inhabitants assembled at Stockheath Lane-End, and met Mr Stone, who alighted from his carriage, and cordially shook hands with several of his friends. A procession was then formed, and headed by the band of the Rifle Corps, the party marched to the centre of the town, where a platform decorated with evergreens, etc, had been erected. The Committee to whom the arrangements had been entrusted had, at the request of the inhabitants, invited the 4th Hants (Havant) Rifle Volunteer Corps to join in the procession, and the Commanding-officer (Capt. Longcroft) had intimated that the corps would attend; but for some reason best known to himself, Alderman Ford, who is the Commanding-officer of the battalion paid a visit to Havant yesterday and prohibited the attendance of the corps, stating that such an act would be a breach of military discipline! The consequence was that the members of the corps, to their great disappointment, were prevented from attending, although the band, over which Colonel Ford has no power, was present, and headed the procession, as already stated. The space immediately in front of the platform was densely crowded with the inhabitants and visitors to the town; and on the procession reaching the platform, Mr Stone and the Committee ascended amidst loud cheering, and the proceedings immediately commenced.

Mr Longcroft, addressing Mr Stone, said he had been deputed by his fellow-townsmen and parishioners to present an address to him, expressing the gratification they felt at the result of the recent contest in the borough of Portsmouth. The interest they felt on the present occasion was greatly enhanced by the fact that Mr Stone had selected that place as his future home, and their interests were consequently to a great extent mixed up with those of the resident landowner and lord of the manor of Havant. Rightly to enter the British House of Commons, a man should have a certain social position and mental training to qualify him for taking part in that deliberative assembly; and they saw in Mr Stone an educated and travelled man, a Fellow of Trinity College, and a type of that class whom they believed most justly entitled to the highest consideration at the hands of an enlightened constituency. – (hear, hear). – The more educated they became the more tolerant they became. For themselves, they desired to see any unreasonable restriction on trade or commerce removed or remitted; they desired to see all the freedom of opinion which was not calculated unnecessary to wound the feelings of others; and they desired to see such an extension of the franchise as might be considered wise and just. (hear, hear). – And they trusted that Mr Stone and the other members of the coming Parliament might exercise their power with a view to the good of the country and the maintenance of civil and religious liberty. (applause). – He would now read the address he had the honour to present to Mr Stone:-

**To William Henry Stone, Esquire, M.P. of Leigh Park,
in the County of Southampton,**

We the inhabitants of the town of Havant desire to offer our sincere congratulations on your election as one of the members for the ancient and important borough of Portsmouth.

We see in the result of that election an approval of the present Government, and a determination to support it against a narrow and retrograde policy. We believe that the principles on which you have come forward are in accordance with the feelings of the people at large, and that they are calculated under God's blessing to contribute to the peace, the welfare, and the advancement of the United Kingdom.

As neighbours and parishioners we share the gratification which attends your success. We see in your contest a laudable ambition on your part to serve your country, and we trust for many years to come you may be resident amongst us and a member of that house which truly represents the intellect and greatness of the English nation.

Dated the seventeenth day of July, 1865.

Mr Stone, who on coming forward to reply was loudly cheered, assured the assembly that he felt much more strongly than he could possibly express in words the kindness with which they had received him, and the expressions of their kind feelings towards him. He could find in his conduct which could make him deserving of such a reception as that. When he was elected member for Portsmouth by that triumphant majority, he felt it was in great measure as the representative of certain principles and on political rather than personal grounds that he was elected. But amongst his neighbours, acquaintances, and friends, he could not but feel there was something of a more strictly personal character – (cheers) – and although that added to his sense of kindness yet it increased the difficulty he had in expressing his feelings on the occasion. He could tell why the electors of Portsmouth had placed such confidence in him. He thought, perhaps, they had been in the habit of looking to Leigh Park for many years, and it was natural to come there again, and when they found a

person whose circumstances rendered it possible to take that position, and a natural ambition to fill that office, they were inclined to give him a trial. – (hear, hear). – They had given him a trial; and he trusted he might never prove unworthy of the confidence they had reposed in him. – (cheers) – He felt particularly grateful that his neighbours, who had more opportunities of knowing what he was, should have manifested such feelings of good-will towards him. Although he had been so short a time amongst them, and much less than he hoped to be – (hear, hear) – they had had some opportunities of seeing him in his private and public capacity, and if he had given them that amount of satisfaction which led him to hope that the voice of Portsmouth had not been misplaced then it was a great encouragement to him. – (hear, hear). – He might, perhaps, be allowed to touch on a matter which was not altogether so agreeable. Certain attacks of a personal character had been made on him during the course of the contest. Of course one did not wish to attach undue importance to election squibs, which were mere matters of the day, and as long as they were confined to political matters they were of little importance, but when it came to an attack on one's personal character, and based on a statement without the slightest foundation, it was natural that a candidate should feel hurt. And he certainly did feel hurt that anything should have been brought in from Havant to damage his character at Portsmouth. – (hear, hear). – Not that he believed the statement originated in Havant; for he had told the electors of Portsmouth he was willing to submit to any investigation they might make. This was perhaps, a liberty to take with his friends at Havant, and perhaps a bold measure; but he ventured to tell the electors of Portsmouth that any person was at liberty to make such investigation, and he would abide by the result. – (cheers). – They knew under what circumstances the enclosure of Havant Thicket had been carried out. They knew it was with the consent of all parties interested, with a trifling exception, and they were also aware he had endeavoured – without disguising that he should be a great gainer by the transaction – to act not merely with the fullest justice to all parties, but with a desire to treat all who were brought into collision with him with liberality. – (cheers). – He did not say that in a boasting spirit; but he merely said it was his wish that the copyholders in this enclosure should be looked on with satisfaction not merely by those who were the gainers by it, but by all classes concerned, and therefore they endeavoured to act with more liberality to all persons interested than perhaps by law they strictly could do. He was naturally, then, a little annoyed to find an insinuation that he had been guilty of harshness and such conduct as would not only be unworthy of his position in Havant, but of the higher position to which he aspired at Portsmouth. He had to thank his friend Mr Longcroft, and his zealous supporter Mr Taplin, for the manner in which they brought the matter forward; and he was especially thankful for the extremely able letter Mr Longcroft wrote which had set him right on that subject. He felt most deeply that he was held in respect among his fellow parishioners and fellow townsmen. As to the future he did not wish to say much. The fewer the pledges he made as to the future, and references to the past, were perhaps the better. What he looked to was actions and political results. If his address expressed the sentiments of the main body of the inhabitants of that town, then he could only say those principles were the principles by which he hoped to be guided in his parliamentary career; and if there were amongst them, as he had no doubt there were, those who differed from the opinions he had expressed still he thought they would feel he had a stake in the country, and was in such a position that though he might advocate measures which to them might seem injudicious, yet he was not likely, with his eyes open, to do anything which might prove a permanent injury to the established institutions of the country. – (cheers). There was one important principle which was at the bottom of politics, and of both parties, and which becoming more understood and recognised – that it was impossible to benefit one class at the expense of others. What they proffered to do in the way of any narrow and limited legislation was sure to recoil on the heads of those who hoped they would be benefitted by it. It was by taking a large view and acting on the broad principle to which he had alluded that they

were likely to promote the real prosperity of the community at large; and he could only say he hoped he might be enabled in the course of his political career, whether it were long or short, to carry out that principle, and also those great principles of civil and religious liberty which tended to the promotion of the general prosperity of the trade, manufacture, and agriculture of the country which had been referred to in the address just read to him. He did not wish to make promises; but he trusted he should never cease to hold the confidence he day enjoyed, and that the longer they knew him the better they would appreciate him. – (cheers). – He thanked them all, and especially Mr Longcroft, for their great kindness that day. – (cheers).

At the conclusion of Mr Stone's address, he was escorted by the Committee and other friends to the railway gate in North Street where the Hon. Gentleman took leave of the party. For the amusement of the public, athletic and other sports took place in "Star" meadow, and were prolonged during the evening.

Hampshire Telegraph, 22 July 1865

Eighteen months later rumours were circulating that Stone was about to relinquish his seat at Portsmouth and offer himself as a candidate for the southern division of Hampshire. An article in the *Hampshire Telegraph* of 20 February 1867 soon quashed all the rumours:

Mr W.H. Stone, M.P. – We are informed that a rumour has obtained currency to the effect that Mr Stone is about to retire from the representation of Portsmouth, and offer himself as a candidate for the southern division of the county. Some of Mr Stone's supporters have, it appears, taken the trouble to inquire whether there was any truth in this statement, and the gist of the Hon. Gentleman's reply, dated "House of Commons, Feb. 18th 1867," is as follows :- "I have not previously heard of the reports which you mention, and I shall feel much indebted to you if you will take any opportunity that may occur to distinctly contradict them, as they are without foundation. I have no intention whatever of voluntarily retiring from the representation of Portsmouth, and should not, under any circumstances, undertake to contest the county." We presume that "the wish was father to the thought" in this case.

Perhaps someone was making mischief and the enclosure of Havant Thicket springs to mind! The same rumour raised its ugly head in June 1868 before the election of that year and again it was strenuously denied by William Stone.

William Stone at Leigh Park – The New Aspect Begins

With the building of the new Mansion it was becoming clear that things were never going to be the same again at Leigh Park, the hey-day of Staunton's Regency and early Victorian splendour were gone and a new style was to take over. Before we look at the many changes that happened at Leigh Park it is fair to say that not all of Staunton's wonderful gardens and parkland disappeared, Stone tried to keep as much as he could of the old gardens. Even today many aspects of Staunton's gardens and estate remain but with the building of the new mansion the whole aspect of the estate changed. To be fair to Stone he did not start with a blank canvas, he may well have removed several of Staunton's garden features, especially in the north garden and close to the lake and this was probably due to the view point from his new mansion. The Temple Lawn area changed for good and other aspects of the gardens disappeared but enough of Staunton's creation remained and as one visitor to Leigh Park in April 1867 remarked: *'Altogether Leigh Park is a very charming place; and as Mr Young, is continually making improvements, in which he is warmly supported by the owner of the estate. I have no doubt that in the course of time it will become one of the finest residences in England.'* (George Newlyn, *Journal of Horticulture & Cottage Gardener* Vol XII, 13 June 1867)

With the building work complete on the new house, Staunton's mansion was demolished, except for the Gothic Library, built by Staunton from designs by Lewis Vuliamy in 1832 and attached as a wing to Staunton's mansion. The original design was based on a Gothic Chapter House and housed Staunton's vast collection of Chinese books which were sadly sold in the auction of Staunton's effects in October 1861. Above the bookcases were stained glass windows depicting members of the Staunton family, which survived intact until the second world war. In the 1874 sales catalogue, after the departure of Stone the Library was described as: *adjoining the spot where the Old Mansion stood is an Octagonal Building formerly the Library, with lofty groined ceiling and stained glass windows representing Warrior Ancestors of the Staunton family, with dates extending back to the year 1040, affording an ornamental object of historical interest.*

Also remaining was the old conservatory which again was attached to the Staunton house. The 1874 sales catalogue described it as *serving as a Camelia House and Orangery, with fine specimens of Tree Ferns and some magnificent Camelia Trees of great size.* It is believed that the conservatory remained in use until the 1930s.

It is easy to see why these features remained after the destruction of the old mansion, the library, which still remains, was used as a garden feature or ornament, maybe even as a summer house. The conservatory was more functional, linked to a certain degree to the old walled garden closeby which still remained it contained some really choice plants. Stone also had an additional conservatory built onto the side of his new mansion.

With the completion of the new house and Staunton's mansion being demolished the whole aspect of the estate changed direction from where formerly the southern part of the grounds with Staunton's house, including his walled garden and farm served as the main focal point. The new focal point became the northern part of the estate with the new house and lake plus new drives and entrances opening up that part of the estate that was formerly just the northern part of the pleasure grounds.

It is worth noting that the building work, which included new stables, new lodge etc. cost the sum of around £20,000 which equates to around £860,000 in today's money and add that to the £60,000 price for the estate which today equates to over £2.5 million it shows how much money Stone spent on Leigh Park.

The first description we get of Stone's "new estate" is from T.E. Jones writing in his *Guide to Hayling* in June 1866. It is also the first mention of the new head gardener George Young who had replaced Thomas Davies, who appeared to only stay at Leigh Park for a short while:

The seat of W.H. Stone, Esq., M.P. for Portsmouth, is one of the most beautiful and attractive places in the vicinity of Hayling. It is about one mile and a half to the northward of Havant. It was formerly the property of Sir George Staunton, Bart., from whose representatives it was purchased about six years ago by Mr Stone, who has added largely to the estate, and after pulling down the former mansion, has erected an entirely new one on a more commanding site, from the designs of Mr R.W. Drew, Architect of London. This house is of red brick with stone dressings, and commands extensive views in every direction. The principal apartments are spacious, and the general design in the highest degree effective. When the conservatory, lodges, and stables are completed, the entire cost of the buildings will exceed £20,000.

Mr Stone's estate comprises in all about 2,500 acres, including Havant Thicket, which extends to 900 acres, and the garden and pleasure grounds which occupy not less than 25 acres. These grounds are under the skilful management of Mr George Young, who has been many years with Mr Stone, and is

one of the most scientific and successful gardeners in England, having taken numerous prizes at the Great Horticultural Exhibitions at Kensington, Regent's Park, the Crystal Palace, etc. Ably seconded by his son and an ordinary staff of fifteen men. Mr Yound has within very a few years succeeded in rendering Leigh Park one of the most beautiful places in the country

With a rare degree of liberality, Mr Stone throws his grounds open to the public inspection on the first and third Mondays in every month, by tickets, which are obtained on application to the Royal Hotel, Hayling and the Bear Hotel, Havant. They are also opened to the public on holidays and other special occasions; and that the privilege is highly valued by the residents of Portsmouth and the neighbourhood is shown by the fact that on Whit Monday in the present year no fewer 20,000 persons visited the grounds, whilst on Coronation Day (28 June 1866) the number present was about 14,000. Of course the great number of these belonged to the working classes and here as elsewhere the same testimony is borne to the good and orderly conduct of these gatherings of the people. Not a flower is plucked, nor a tree or shrub injured.

The attendance of the police either in or out of uniform is unnecessary, and the more numerous the visitors the less appears to be even the risk of injury to the place. Two day's work, with a few extra gardeners, suffice to remove all traces of an assemblage so vast as that last mentioned.

Jones goes on to record several fine specimen trees and other plants and highlights the fact that the Victoria Regia Lily, first planted at Leigh Park by Sir George Staunton in 1853, is the finest in the country and records the wonderful collection of plants in the old conservatory which Stone retained from the old house:

*The heaths and azaleas are of the choicest description, and in one large old conservatory is a wonderful collection of camelias, oranges, lemons, citrons, etc., one orange tree in the present summer being loaded to profusion with its rich and golden fruit. The collection of orchids is very fine and extensive, and includes the first plant of *Cryptopodium punctatum* which flowered in the British Isles. Omitting all notice of the pineries, graperies, and peach-houses, which are each and all as perfect as nature and art can make them, we may allude to the very fine collection of aquatic plants. These, which occupy several spacious tanks, are in luxurious perfection.*

As T.E. Jones's article testifies an awful lot of what he describes in 1866 originates from the days of Sir George Staunton. As we have noted the aspect of the estate changed with the building of Stone's mansion but one thing that did not was the south gardens which included the stove house, hothouses, greenhouse and the walled garden which Stone kept intact. Also remaining in this area was the Arboretum 'comprising some unusually fine Conifers, embracing what is believed to be the finest specimen in England of the *Picea Pinsapo*, also *Cupressus Funnebris*, a very fine *Araucaria Imbricata*, *Salisburia Adiantifolia*, and many other Trees, which, having been imported many years ago by that well-known Horticulturist, the late Sir George Staunton, have attained a splendid growth' (1874 Sales particulars) and lawns of the old mansion studded with fine specimens of Cedar of Lebanon, Evergreen Oak, Arbutus, Cork, Copper Beech and Fir.



The Gothic Library, 1944, with the stained glass windows intact

A lot of what was going on in the garden was originally down to Staunton's long time head gardener Alexander Scott and Stone's head gardener George Young was more than an able replacement. As Jones recorded George Young won numerous prizes at national horticultural shows as he did in more local shows as for example at the Chichester & Brighton Floriculture Show, held at Chichester in September 1862 when *'Mr Young, of Leigh Park had the first prize for a collection eight dishes of fruit, including a fine pineapple and also a dish of fine Walberton peaches. Mr Young received first prize for any other specimen of pineapple.'*

Another example being at the Gosport and Alverstoke Horticultural Society Show in August 1862:

The exhibitors were very numerous and extended over a circle of upwards of ten miles, and among some of the most choice productions in foliage plants, ferns and mosses, specimen plants, flowers, fruit and vegetables, were those shown by Mr W.H. Stone of Leigh Park, Havant. Mr Stone succeeded in taking no less than ten first prizes

Hampshire Telegraph, 30 August 1862



The Leigh Park Estate during William Stone's residence, circa 1870

A good example of the national horticultural shows can be seen from May 1862 when George Young won £7 and first prize at the Crystal Palace Flower Show for 12 fine foliage and variegated plants. He won the same prize in May 1864.

In April 1867, George Newlyn of Dangstein, Rogate, West Sussex, visited Leigh Park, and like T. E. Jones before him, described the gardens not in too much of a dissimilar nature. Newlyn picks up on several points on new work being carried out in the gardens and it would go amiss if his article was not recorded in full:

A Visit to Leigh Park

I recently accompanied a friend to the gardens appertaining to Leigh Park, near Havant, Hampshire, the residence of W.H. Stone, Esq., M.P.; and amidst the varying lights and shades of an April day, passed a few hours most agreeably amongst the objects of Nature's handiwork which are met with there.

The neat little town of Havant, lying on the South Coast Line, about seven miles from Portsmouth, is easily accessible to holiday-seekers, and the attractions of the Park are fully appreciated in summer by visitors from miles around. The entrances to the place are from the Portsmouth turnpike road; that which afforded us ingress is about a mile and a half from Havant, and is provided with a handsome lodge, the architectural design of which is the first evidence of taste which attracts the eyes of a stranger. After entering at this place, and following a carriage drive winding amongst "ancestral trees," we came to a slight wire fence separating the shrubberies and precincts of the mansion from the park without. Passing this, my attention was first arrested by a curious looking building of which the masonry, grey with age, proclaimed its antiquity. A most intelligent guide who accompanied us through the grounds informed us this was the old library, the present mansion being a modern erection, and occupying a different site from that of the old house. The library is a beautiful octagonal building, and its eight oriel windows contain excellent paintings relating to the Staunton family, to whom the estate formerly belonged. The harmonious blending and richness of the colours in these windows is very attractive to the eye, and skillful workmanship displayed in the carved surroundings enhances their beauty.

*From near this place a straight path diverged towards the aquatic-house, where the Egyptian paper plant (*Papyrus autiquorum*), Bullrushes of the Nile, interspersed with the blossoms of the *Victoria Regia* and other water plants, displayed themselves in natural perfection. The goldfish here were remarkable for their tameness as well as their beauty.*

*Leaving the aquarium we passed into the Orchid-house, which is connected. Here are many new and rare species of Orchids, some of which are very fine specimens. Of these most of the names have escaped my memory; but my attention was forcibly attracted by a profuse growing *Allamand Schettii* trained to the roof, which it traverses. Besides looking very ornamental, it excellently guards off the direct rays of the sun.*

Leaving this house, and going westward of this range, we passed through two vineries and a Heath-house. In the latter the numerous varieties were most brilliant and lovely – as lovely, so lovely, that in gazing on the beauty of the Australian plants I was reminded of those lines-

*"Another Flora there of bolder hues
And richer sweets beyond our garden pride,
Plays o'er the fields."*

I lingered amongst these charming plants, and shall always retain a pleasing recollection of the Heath-house at Leigh Park. Here a glass case 4 feet wide is connected and extends the whole length of the west wall. This is made serviceable for many purposes as well as the protection of the trees on the wall from late spring frosts, and preventing the fruit from being damaged by heavy rains when approaching maturity.

Retracing our steps to the Orchid-house, and making our way through the entire range, we were next introduced to two more vineries, one of which contained coloured grapes, all, I believe, of the Black Hamburgh kind, and admirably trained. The peach-house completed this range. Two other vineries were passed, and then we came to the pineries, consisting of four ranges, two of them lean-tos and the other two span roofed pits. The two latter contained successions of fruiting Pines. All presenting a very healthy appearance.

Next we were shown a large and lofty Stove, in which were fine specimens of flowering and ornamental foliaged plants and tree Ferns – viz, two plants of Maranta Porteana, and also of Maranta zebrina, two handsome specimens of Cyas revoluta, Zamia Lebmanni, Philodendron Pertusum, Musa Cavendishii, in fruit, Ixoras, etc. Among the tree Ferns were Dickscenia antarctica, Cyathea dealbata and Cibotium princeps. Some seedling Gymnogrammas were also worth mentioning.

A propagating pit was the next building we entered. This contained cuttings of plants of valuable species, all affording good evidence of their careful culture. We were then conducted along the back of the building, taking the orchard-house on our way; and passing by a side walk towards the east we entered the new kitchen garden. This has only recently been formed, but promises full well under the management of Mr Young, the head gardener. It is three acres in extent admirably laid out, and walled in, and the various crops are in a thriving state. There are a number of new pits for forcing vegetables, and cucumbers and melons were in a flourishing state.

Passing out of the kitchen garden, through the shrubberies, we soon arrived at the new carriage drive, on one side of which is a thickly-planted border of Rhododendrons, and on the other a neat plantation of choice Conifers on a well-kept piece of turf. We continued our walk along this winding and ornamental drive towards the mansion, which is about 350 yards north-west of the kitchen garden. A new conservatory, a lofty and imposing structure, graces the south front of the mansion. Being unfinished, there is nothing worthy of remark here, save the extensive and lovely landscape which is opened to the view, bounded by the hills of the Isle of Wight, and with the sea in the foreground. Hayling Island is distinctly seen, and right and left is spread a panorama of picturesque scenery as beautiful as any in this country. A narrow spiral staircase conducts from this conservatory to a vaulted corridor, open to the west on the lowest level on the west front. This is designed as a promenade on rainy days. From this corridor we passed onto the green turf before the house. It is an elegant edifice, very unlike the general massive and stately architecture employed in England. The style is pure Swiss, with all the gables and terraces prominent as a mountain chateau.

Descending about 500 yards of gentle slope we came to the borders of sheet of ornamental water. This miniature lake, three acres in extent, has an island in the centre nearly covered in the season with brilliant Rhododendrons. We were told that a former owner of the estate had a regular war sloop lying here completely rigged and manned, and a ruined fort is still shown on the island, which was made to resist mimic bombardments, for the amusements of a generation that has now passed away. There are various points of attraction in the grounds we traversed around the water, such as the rustic bridge connecting the island with the mainland, some rustic shady retreats, a very pretty grotto, and a rockery, where hardy ferns were flourishing amongst early spring flowers.

Leaving this we ascended the hill towards the Conifer ground. Having gained one of the walks which wind through a part of the pleasure grounds, we passed one of the rose gardens and along the south

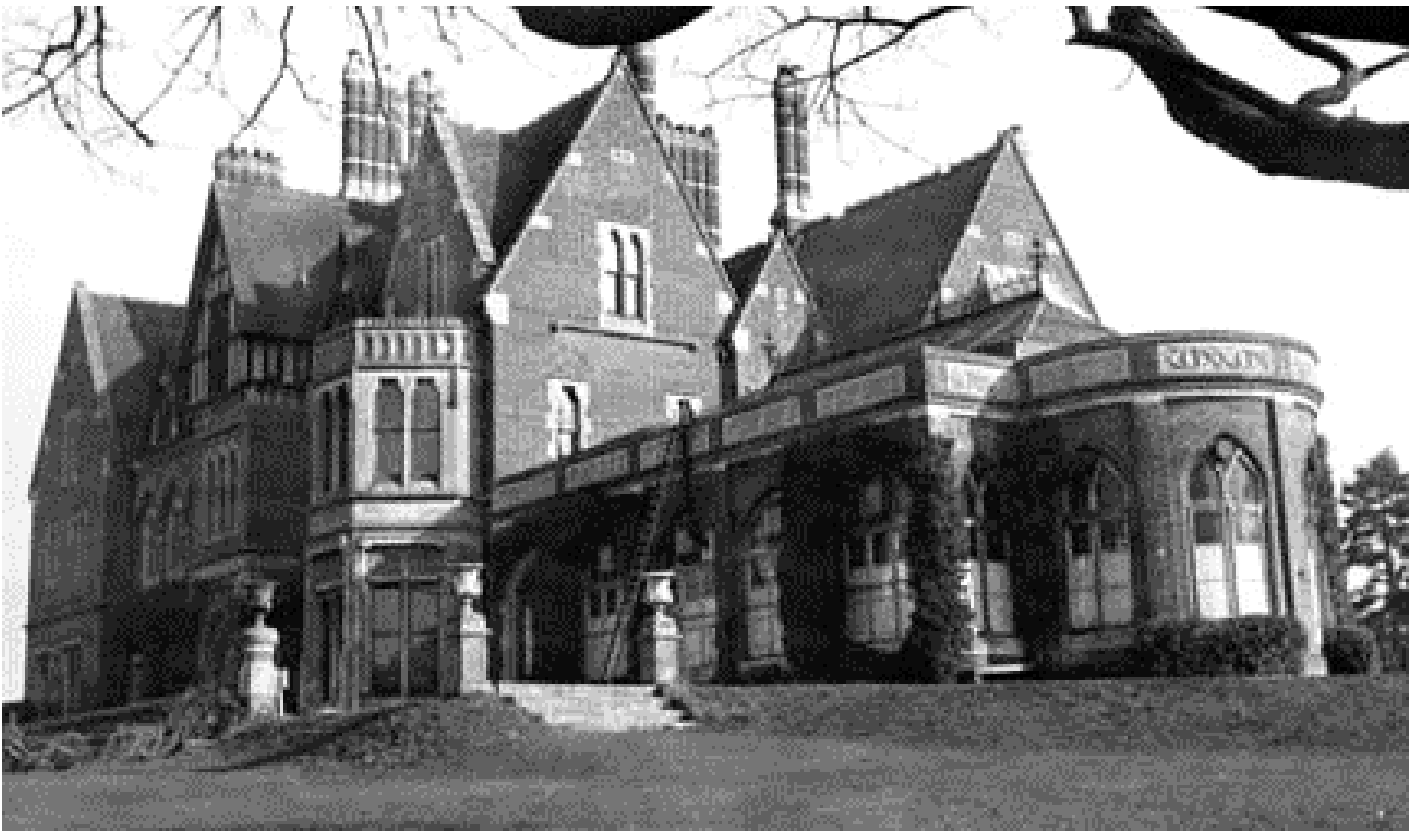
and west side of the fruit garden. Here we saw Camellias in full bloom trained to the wall. Not one of them had suffered by the severity of the late winter. We were now among the conifers. All these are certainly worthy of remark individually, and the least I can say is that amongst others two magnificent plants Arancaria imbricata may be seen there without a blemish in any tier from top to bottom; also a Picea pinsapo, superior to any which I have seen in uniform growth and size. A few steps further brought us past another Rose garden to the old conservatory, the freshness and beauty of its tenants being unsurpassable, and the grouping and arrangement excellent.

Making such a hurried visit I had not time to pay attention individually to the various specimens of plant life with which this place is enriched. Altogether Leigh Park is a very charming place; and as Mr Young (to whose courtesy I shall always feel indebted), is continually making improvements, in which he is warmly supported by the owner of the estate. I have no doubt that in the course of time it will become one of the finest residences in England. – George Newlyn, Dangstein

Journal of Horticulture & Cottage Gardener Vol XII, 13 June 1867

Newlyn describes in detail the state of the south gardens remarking on the wonderful state of the glass-houses and the plants within. He also notes the work that had been carried out at Leigh Park in the short while Stone had been there. He mentions a new walled garden *of three acres in extent admirably laid out, and walled in, and the various crops are in a thriving state. There are a number of new pits for forcing vegetables, and cucumbers and melons were in a flourishing state.* This walled garden still survives, now known as Storey Gardens it now sits close to the junction of Middle Park way and Petersfield Road. It was probably a replacement for the kitchen garden known as Little Hackets, situated in Great Copse, although this still appeared to be in cultivation as late as 1874. The walled garden in the south gardens would have continued as an ornamental garden.

Another point raised by Newlyn was in regard to the new conservatory on the side of Stone's new house. Not too much information has ever been gleaned on this structure and Newlyn remarks that at the time of his visit it was uncomplete. The 1874 sales particulars describe it as: *about 44ft. by 22ft. with tresselated floor and flower beds, and semi-circular projection forming super-heated portion for delicate flowers.* Unfortunately no list of plants grown there has ever been printed. Interestingly, at the end of the war it housed an exhibition of mines and torpedoes, some presumably designed at Leigh Park during the war years.



Leigh Park House, circa 1940 during the Admiralty occupation. Note the large conservatory to the side of the mansion.



Watercolour of Leigh Park House by Rowlands Castle painter Charles Rogers Cotton, circa 1870

So what do we know of other changes that took place around the gardens and estate? With the building of the new house we know many of Staunton's garden features disappeared, perhaps the most notable was the gardener's cottage on the island on the lake. This was demolished to open up the view from the house and a cottage in Stone's eye detracted from this. Around the lake saw the disappearance of the Chinese Summer House, the site would become the new ice house which still remains; the Turkish Kiosk and Green Arbor also vanished as did the Chinese Boat House.

On Temple Lawn Staunton's election column also went, although the description relating to the election at Portsmouth was installed in the Shell House. With the destruction of Staunton's Temple it also appeared that the 25 busts of prominent people that Staunton knew and admired had also been lost. The list included a bust of Staunton himself and notables such as Sir Joseph Banks, George Canning, and Admiral Sir Charles Napier. Many had visited Staunton at Leigh Park and it would seem very unfortunate if they were all destroyed as many were made by leading sculptures of the Victorian age. Four tablets, remembering friends and family of Sir George Staunton, from the Temple Urn, were also placed within the Shell House, though now sadly missing. The Urn itself was retained as a garden feature.

The Rosary, Moss House, Look-out and Temple Bridge were also swept away from this part of the gardens for the building of the new mansion.



One of the oldest known photographs of Leigh Park House, circa 1870. Note the statue of Flora on Cottage Island which sadly disappeared.

As we have already noted the south gardens remained almost intact but it would appear that the Dutch Garden with the Swiss Wood House, originally built by William Garrett, disappeared as did other garden ornaments. With the building of Stone's new stable buildings and head coachman's quarters the Staunton's stables and coach-house in the south gardens became almost redundant, probably used for

other purposes and as an overflow to the new buildings. Luckily, along with other buildings such as the gardener's bothy they still remain. They are the oldest surviving buildings on the estate, being built by Samuel Harrison when he built the first Leigh Park House in the 1780s. The site of Staunton's house after its demolition had become a sunken rosary.

One of the first changes made by Stone after he acquired the estate was to establish a cricket pitch on Front Lawn close to Stockheath Lane, the site still remains as Front Lawn Recreation Ground. This was certainly established by August 1862 when the *Hampshire Telegraph* recorded:

Havant v Emsworth

On Tuesday (5 August 1862), the return match of the Havant v Emsworth Cricket Clubs was played at Leigh Park, near the former town, when Havant won by 95 runs. The batting of Messrs. Carter, Sen., and Goldsmith was particularly good, as was the bowling of Mr Diloway.

Hampshire Telegraph, 9 August 1862

William Stone must have been a cricket enthusiast as he himself played for a Havant team at Leigh Park against the 55th Regiment on 27 August 1863. Unfortunately the Havant team was completely outplayed making 65 in their first innings and only 42 in the second. The 55th Regiment made 263 runs in their only innings winning by an innings and 156 runs. William Stone was out for a duck in the first innings and made one run in the second.

By 1870 a new pavilion had been built at Front Lawn for the comfort of the players and it was appearing that the Havant team were playing more of their matches at Leigh Park, instead of Stockheath Common which was their earlier venue:

The first match of cricket of this season was played in Leigh Park, on Monday and Tuesday, between the Priory Park, Chichester, and the Havant clubs. A large pavilion has been erected in the park by W.H. Stone, Esq., M.P., which greatly adds to the comfort of the players, and increases the obligation the Havant club are under to Mr Stone, who has always placed his beautiful ground at their disposal. The match terminated in the defeat of the Havant Club, the Priory Park scoring 106 in the first innings against their 31; and in the second innings got the 65 to win, with two wickets down.

Hampshire Telegraph, 23 July 1870

During 1872 season Stone played twice more for the Havant Club in two matches against Portsmouth Garrison. In the first match which Havant lost he scored one and two runs in the two innings. He had much better success in the drawn match on 21 and 22 August where he scored two runs in the first innings and twenty one in the second.

The last cricket match Stone himself played in was an intriguing game made up of a team from the Leigh Park Estate versus eleven men of the nearby Stanstead Estate at Leigh Park on 4 September 1873. No doubt Stone captained the Leigh Park team and the then owner of Stanstead, George Wilder captained his team.

LEIGH PARK V. STANSTED

LEIGH PARK

First Innings		Second Innings	
Mr C. Bullock, c. Fletcher, b. Fossey	0	c. Knight, b. Hammond	13
Mr A. Dilloway, b. G. Wilder	0	run out	7
Mr J. Cogswell, b. G. Wilder	0	b. Knight	2
Mr J. Carter, sen., b. Fossey	12	b. Hammond	17
Mr J. Carter, jun., c. Heath, b. Fossey	30	run out	2
Mr H. Porter, run out	31	run out	1
W. H. Stone, Esq., run out	5	b. Knight	2
Mr. W. Porter, c. Rogers, b. Hammond	0	run out	2
Mr Bedford, b. Hammond	0	not out	5
Mr Harding, b. Hammond	0	b. Knight	10
Mr Benham, not out	0	b. Knight	2
Extras	7	Extras	2
Total	83	Total	65

STANSTED

First Innings		Second Innings	
G. Wilder Esq., b. Dilloway	5	hit wicket, b. Dilloway	0
Mr W. Fossey, b. Bullock	9	not out	20
Mr Knight, b. Dilloway	1		
Mr Crowder, b. Dilloway	0		
Mr Rogers, b. Dilloway	5		
Mr Heath, b. Bullock	1		
Mr Hammond, b. Dilloway	15		
Mr Godwin, not out	39	not out	6
Mr Gibbons, c. Harding, b. Dilloway	2		
Mr Fletcher, b. Bullock	38		
Mr Lambourn s. Carter, b. Dilloway	1		
Extras	4	Extras	0
Total	123	Total	26

Over the two innings Stansted were victorious by nine wickets.

The cricket ground at Front Lawn was still used by the Havant Club after the departure of William Stone, indeed his predecessor, Sir Fredeick Fitzwygram, Bt., carried on the tradition of allowing matches to be played at Leigh Park.

As well as being a cricket enthusiast Stone was also a keen sportsman, shooting in particular it appeared. Since taking over the estate Stone had improved this side of the estate as the 1874 sales particulars when he left Leigh Park recorded:

The vendor enjoys the sole right of sporting over the entire Estate. The coverts are well placed, and the Pheasants have been carefully preserved, there is also good partridge and woodcock shooting, and an ample quantity of ground game. The vendor rents a large additional tract of shooting, and it is probable that part of this together with other Shooting could be had by the Purchaser.

Perhaps the most unusual feature was the cutting of a one and a quarter mile long broad avenue, emanating from close to the new house in a NNE direction, with a swimming pool and bathing house situated just over half the length of the avenue. There can be no direct reason why this was cut, it certainly took the eye away from the lake as a focal point and certainly changed the look of the landscape in this part of the grounds. Under Staunton the Canning monument, a 50ft high obelisk, erected by Staunton in 1832 in memory of Sir George Canning, was the original focal point from Temple Lawn with the Thicket in the distance. It remained under Stone until it sadly fell into disrepair.

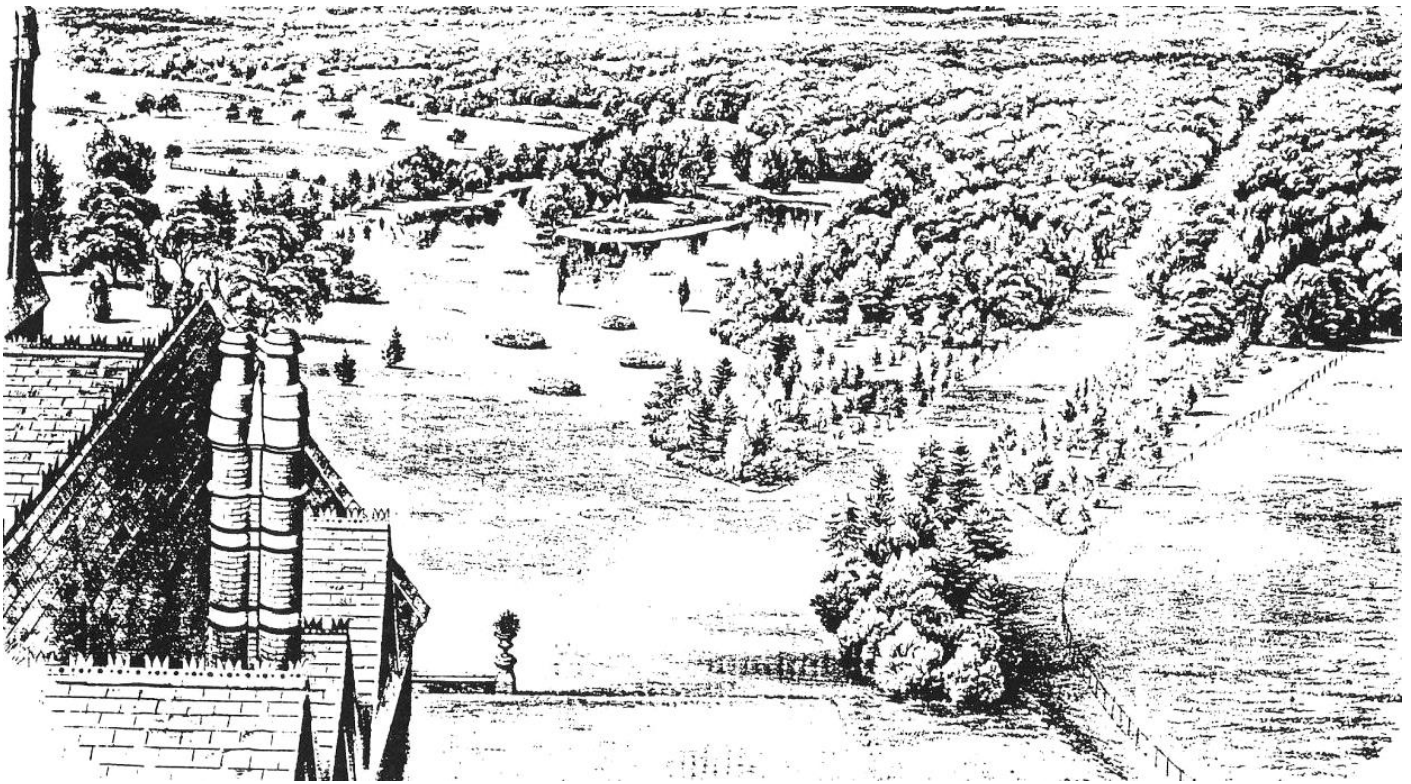
Stone also carried out work on the lake itself, enlarging and reshaping it at the northern end and adding another island. It is almost certain that the Corinthian Bridge disappeared at this time. Interestingly, Stone had the lake '*bricked all round at a very considerable expense*'. Overlooking the lake a croquet terrace was formed leading from the steps of the house. Later owners used this as a tennis court. Luckily Staunton's Chinese bridge remained, which it still does, described in 1874 as a rustic bridge.

On the broader estate changes were being made, Stone had inherited the Home Farm after his purchase of the estate, along with Middle Park Farm, Havant Farm, and several small holdings and cottages, all of course with tenants. In regard to the Home Farm it had been under Staunton and William Garrett before him more an ornamental farm, or *farme ornee*, in other words part of the broader landscape. This did not stop it from being leased out to various farmers. By the time Stone moved to Leigh Park it was leased to John Bridger Clarke on a fourteen year lease from 29 September (Michaelmas) 1852. In April 1862 Clarke quit the farm, whether this was due to Stone is unclear, and an auction of Clarke's livestock and farm equipment was carried out. Not too much more information can be found regarding the farm during Stone's occupation of Leigh Park apart from an interesting report in the *Hampshire Telegraph* of 29 September 1869:

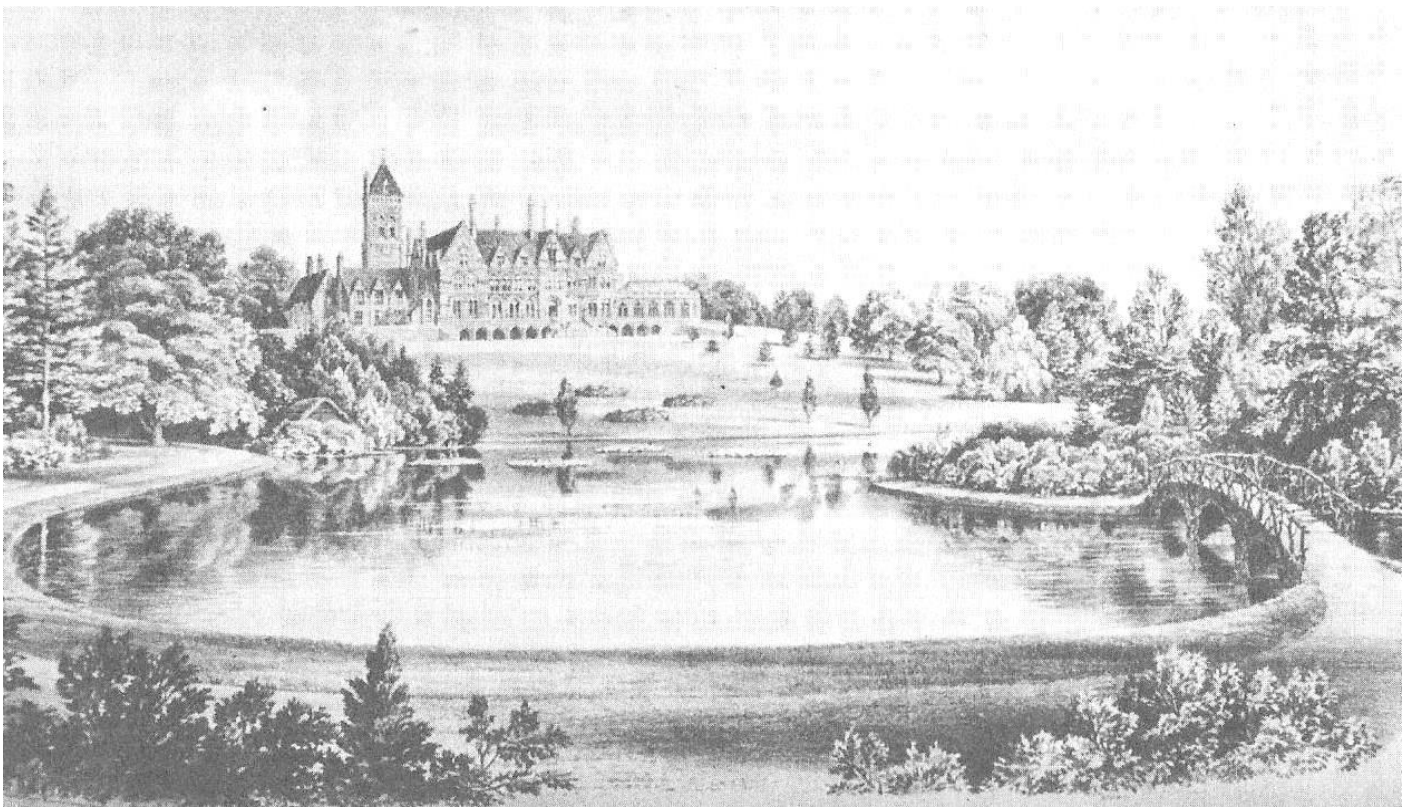
Havant Supper – On Friday last the employees and workmen on the Leigh Park Farm, numbering between 70 and 80 sat down to their annual supper at Leigh Farm. Mr Carter (Farm Baliff) took the chair, supported by Mr Young (Head Gardener). The loyal and complimentary toasts were drunk, coupled with the name of Mr W.H. Stone, Esq., M.P. and family. A most pleasant evening being spent by all. The following day a match of cricket was played by men between "Single and Married," the former proving victorious.

Of course with all the farms, small holdings and cottages on the estate this brought in revenue and Stone was not short in building extra cottages around the estate, some for estate workers others for rent, and we will look at these in a little more detail later. On 4 April 1863 Stone added another farm to the estate, namely Leigh Farm, or as it became known as Prospect Farm, situated to the east of the Home Farm. He paid £2,548 3s 8d to Thomas Pemberton and the Estate of the late Ebenezer Johnston. The farm at the time of the sale measured a little over 117 acres and abutted onto the estate of Leigh Park. By the time of the 1874 sale of the estate it measured over 160 acres.

Perhaps the most prominent change that occurred at Leigh Park and brought about some reaction locally was the enclosure of Havant Thicket. It was a problem that vexed Sir George Staunton before him and the background to the Thicket needs some explanation as does the enclosure process itself:



'View from the House' Engraving from the 1874 Sales Catalogue. Note the Avenue running through the Thicket to the right of illustration.



'View of the Mansion from the Lake' Engraving from the Sales Catalogue, 1874. Note the Chinese Bridge has become more rustic by this date.



Plan of Leigh Farm, 4 April 1863, from the sale to William Henry Stone (HRO 102M86/1)

Enclosure of Havant Thicket

In the Middle Ages the common lands of the parish of Havant would have comprised an open field system for arable cultivation and several dispersed areas of woodland, heath and coastal marsh, all defined legally as 'waste' though they were far from useless or unproductive. Of the open field system we have no knowledge. It must have been enclosed at an early date, possibly in the Tudor period, and by informal agreement, thus leaving no documentary evidence. But the waste lands, totalling some 887 acres, remained unenclosed until the middle of the 19th Century, and by far the largest proportion of this - over 90% - was Havant Thicket. The other areas were Stockheath, Leigh Green, and some coastal marsh at South Moor, West Marsh and Broad Lane.

Havant Thicket had originally been part of the huge Forest of Bere, but became detached from it in the late 11th Century and later passed into the possession of the Bishops of Winchester, most probably when they acquired the Lordship of the Manor of Havant in 1284. It then became a 'Chase' for them to hunt deer, and this suggests that the

landscape may have been substantially altered at this time. 'Thicket' is an Anglo-Saxon word defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as *a dense growth of shrubs, underwood and small trees; a place where low trees and bushes grow thickly together*; but such a landscape is useless for hunting, so converting it into a Chase would have entailed the clearing of much undergrowth, leaving extensive open spaces between the trees, much as is to be seen today. (One large clearing is still marked on maps as Deerslaughter Plain.)

Just how frequently the bishops hunted here is open to question, for the Thicket was just one of a number of Chases that they possessed in Hampshire and must have been nowhere near as important as, say, Waltham Chase (also created out of the Forest of Bere) which was conveniently adjacent to their palace at Bishops Waltham. Nevertheless when they leased out the Lordship of the Manor of Havant to Ralph Cotton in 1553 they chose to retain their hunting rights and also their right to cut timber.

The bishops continued to lease out the Lordship until 1827 when it was purchased outright for the sum of £2,075 1s. 9d. (£2,075.09) by Sir George Staunton, the then owner of the Leigh Park estate. By this time, however, the herd of deer had been severely depleted, almost to the point of extinction. The trouble was that the Thicket (like all chases and in contrast to deer parks) had no fenced or ditched boundaries, leaving the deer free to wander out and, just as importantly, poachers to wander in. Even as late as 1801 the authors of the Hampshire Repository could assert that *we still meet with fallow deer in this Chace* (although they conceded that poaching was a problem) but Walter Butler, in his Topographical Account of the Hundred of Bosmere, published just 16 years later, painted a much gloomier picture:

Till late it (The Thicket) harboured a herd of fallow deer, the property of the bishop; a keeper was appointed over them; but all his vigilance, or the severity of the game laws, could not prevent their destruction, either by farmers when the deer wandered from their haunts into the neighbouring farms, or by other persons, who shot them in the thickest part of the forest in defiance of the gamekeeper.

The right to cut timber, however, was much more important than the right to hunt. Indeed it was the subject of a complex and protracted legal dispute between the Bishop of Winchester and Joseph Franklin (the then leaseholder of the Lordship) in the late 18th Century, and the bishops were careful to retain their timber rights even after they sold the Lordship to Staunton. Just how profitable these could be was demonstrated in 1829 when the following advertisement appeared in the local press:

To be SOLD by AUCTION at the Bear Inn, Havant, on Monday 16th March 1829. Upwards of 6000 OAK TIMBER TREES with their lop, top and bark, being in different parts of Havant Thicket, at a very short distance from the sea. All the trees are numbered and marked with white paint, and are of useful sizes for a variety of purposes.

There were in all 19 separate lots and the destruction that must have ensued after they had been disposed of is dramatically conveyed in James King's *A Poem Upon Leigh Park: The Seat of G.T. Staunton Bart.* which was published just six months after the auction:

Hark to the echo of the woodman's stroke
Hark to the thunder of the falling oak!
Why thus insult this venerable place?
Why from their haunts the guiltless Dryada chase?
And why these unwanted noises scare Each beast and herd that long hath nestled there?

King (who was actually one of Staunton's tenants) was under the impression that all this timber was to be used by the Bishop of Winchester himself for some grandiose building scheme:

Soon from their spoils a palace shall arise
And with its swelling dome invade the skies.
Grudge not its burthen to the groaning swain
That bears the tribute of this lone domain.
What sylvan gladly yields not her retreat
When Winton's prelate rears the pastoral seat?

But the reality was, of course, that the vast majority at any rate was sold for hard cash.

The Bishop of Winchester, however, was not the only person to enjoy rights in Havant Thicket, for the Copyhold tenants of the Lords of the Manors of Havant and Flood were entitled to graze their horses and cattle there, turn out their pigs in the autumn to feed on the acorns (a right known as pannage), cut furze and underwood for fuel, and even take some timber, provided they had none of their own and it was used for repairing their own property. (Even then they were permitted to take enough for just half of any such repairs.)

When Staunton purchased Leigh Park in 1819 these common rights were attached to some 325 properties, most of them belonging to the Manor of Havant and just 15 to the Manor of Flood. The Manor of Flood requires some explanation. It was not a particular area but rather a number of separate properties within the Manor of Havant, the majority in West Street (including the Dolphin Hotel) the remainder in Homewell, North Street and Durrants. Longcroft, in his *Hundred of Bosmere* (p.26) believed that it was created by Ralph Cotton when he obtained the lease of the Lordship of the Manor of Havant in 1553, perhaps as a means of raising some extra revenue; but its true origins are wholly unknown, as is the origin of its name. Moreover as the Lord of the Manor of Havant was always Lord of the Manor of Flood, and as the terms of tenancy in both manors seems to have been more or less identical, it is difficult to view the Manor of Flood as anything more than an arcane legal curiosity.

By the time the Act of Parliament authorising the enclosure of the Thicket and the other waste lands of the parish had been passed in 1864 the process of enclosing the common lands of England, begun in the 16th Century, was practically complete. Virtually all the arable open field systems had long since vanished and the enclosure of woods, moors, heaths was proceeding apace.

Originally each individual enclosure scheme required its own Act of Parliament, but in 1836 the law was relaxed to allow enclosure by consent, without the need for Parliamentary approval, provided certain conditions were met. But this was soon deemed to be a step too far, and in 1845 new safeguards were introduced. Henceforth all enclosure schemes had to be vetted by independent Inclosure Commissioners ('inclosure' being the formal legal spelling of the word) and in 1852 the requirement to obtain parliamentary approval was re-introduced. Now, however, instead of separate Acts for each scheme a number of them could be bundled together in a single Act. This is precisely what happened in Havant's case, for its Act of Inclosure, which received the Royal Assent early in September 1864, also included 24 other schemes from all over the country. (The enclosure of North Common and Creek Common in North Hayling parish was also attached to the Havant scheme.)

This desire to make the enclosing of common lands much easier to obtain was driven not only by economic factors (they were felt to be an inefficient way of using the land) but also by fears that they endangered the social order, and this Establishment attitude towards them is neatly summed up by Walter Butler (himself a solicitor who would later become Staunton's steward on the Leigh Park estate):

Commons are great public nuisances, the resort of gypsies and vagrants, who poach the game, break down the fences and prey upon the public without contributing anything towards the common good.

Writing when he did, in 1817, Butler would most certainly have had Havant Thicket in mind, for it seems that in the early years to the 19th Century it and other common lands in the area such as Emsworth Common and Hambrook Common were particularly prone to highway robbery. According to the anonymous author of *Old Portsmouth: Pictures of the Past* which appeared in the *Hampshire Telegraph* in 1887:

Havant and its neighbourhood was a favourite haunt for the highwayman. The secluded parts about Hambrook Common and Havant Thicket were never safe for the unarmed traveller after dark.

The worst year by far was 1807 when robberies, previously confined to winter and night-time, were taking place all year round and often in broad daylight. The article continues:

In the winter of 1807 the Magistrates met at Havant and invested all the constables and peace officers of the adjoining parishes with proper authority to search for and apprehend all suspected persons, especially all such persons who were found on Emsworth Common, Havant Thicket and the surrounding forest. On that night the roads were patrolled by peace officers and Volunteers. A corridor was drawn around the commons, but although many vagrants and pedlars were arrested during the next few days and detained until the victims could inspect them, not one of them was connected with any of the crimes that had inspired the neighbourhood with such terror.

In reality most of the robberies had been committed by just one man, John Pitt, a sawyer who lived near Stansted, and after he was convicted and hanged in the spring of 1808 things became much quieter. It is probably not entirely coincidental, however, that in 1810 Emsworth Common was enclosed, and Acts to enclose other local commons at Blendworth, Cosham, Chalton and Clanfield were all passed within the next three years. Hambrook Common was finally enclosed in 1820.

Why Havant Thicket escaped a similar fate at this time is uncertain; possibly its episcopal links saved it.

Charles Longcroft tells us (in a letter to the *Hampshire Telegraph* of 1 July 1865 to which we shall return) that after Sir George Staunton acquired the Manorial Lordships he did try to enclose the Thicket, but could not reach agreement either with his tenants or the Bishop of Winchester over compensation for the relinquishment of their customary rights. He did, however, buy up a large number of Copyhold tenancies and convert them to Freehold, reducing the number of properties with commoners' rights to about 100 - 120. By this time the Thicket was certainly a much less dangerous and marginal place, but even as late as 1846 it was still the venue for an illegal prize fight between John Jones of Portsmouth and Ted Hill of Brighton. The bout had actually commenced at Prinsted, but was broken up by the authorities after 12 rounds, at which point the pugilists – and, presumably, the crowd watching them – decamped to the Thicket where the remaining six rounds were contested, Jones emerging as the clear winner. (Bell's *Life In London*, 29 November 1846)

William Stone and the Enclosure of Havant Thicket, 1864

For Stone enclosing Havant Thicket and, thus ending what he must have regarded as the feudal anachronisms of commoners' rights and episcopal privileges, must have seemed like the perfectly logical thing to do. According to Longcroft's letter of July 1865 he soon came to an agreement with all the major interested parties, including the

Bishop, over compensation, and once this had been achieved Parliamentary approval was little more than a formality.

At the end of November 1864, just weeks after this approval had been obtained, the following notice appeared in the *Hampshire Telegraph*:

I, RICHARD PINK of Hambledon in the County of Southampton the Valuer acting in the matter of the Inclosure of Havant Thicket, Stock Heath, Leigh Green, Southmoor, West Marsh, Broad lane, North Common and Creek Common situate in the parishes of Havant and North Hayling, in the County of Southampton, hereby give notice that I shall hold a meeting on the 17th day of December 1864, at the Bear Inn, in the said parish of Havant, at Eleven o'clock in the forenoon, for the purpose of receiving claims in writing from all the persons claiming any common or other rights of interest... (in the said lands)... and such claims must state the several particulars in respect of Freehold, Copyhold Customary and Leasehold from each other and mentioning therein the place of abode of the respective claimants, or their agents, of which notice in respect of such claims may be delivered.

Given under my hand this 26th day of November in the Year of our Lord 1864.

RICHARD PINK

A second meeting was convened on the 14 January 1865 and a third on the 18 February (both at the Bear), after which no more claims were to be considered.

At first sight Richard Pink seems like an odd choice for Valuer, for he was not a local man and had never before done any enclosure work. Moreover Havant had its own highly respected Valuer (not to mention surveyor, auctioneer and cartographer) in Charles Lewis, who had been working in the town for some 30 years. The most likely explanation for Pink's appointment by the Inclosure Commissioners is that he was a qualified Timber Surveyor (Lewis was not) and as by far the most substantial part of the valuation would concern the Bishop of Winchester's timber rights in the Thicket it was probably felt that expertise in this field was essential.

But before Pink could complete his task of assessing the hundred or more claims that must have been submitted to him, the enclosure of the Thicket suddenly became a political issue when a General Election was called for 13 July 1865.

As Stone was standing as one of the two Liberal candidates for the Borough of Portsmouth seat his Conservative opponents lost no time, once campaigning commenced at the end of June, in portraying the enclosure scheme in the worst possible light. They issued a pamphlet - now unfortunately lost - entitled *Facts for Working Men* in which they accused Stone of acting like an autocrat, not only trampling on commoners' rights but also stopping up ancient rights of way through the Thicket. As a letter from 'A Quiet Looker-on' put it in the Conservative-supporting *Portsmouth Times and Naval Gazette* for 24 June: 'Mr. Stone has been too busy of late managing his estate and superintending the closure of Havant Thicket, thus depriving the public of access to that delightful spot'.

Then there was the Affair of the Impounded Cow, as described in another letter printed in the *Portsmouth Times and Naval Gazette* although said to have been sent originally to the Conservative Election Room:

Dear Sir, I have A Few Lines to acquaint you with agint Mr Stone, For the truth you Can ad on your Bills E Pounded a Poor Woman Cow For two Pound - and the Poor Woman Could not Rise the Money the Consequence was E sold the Poor Woman Cow to Pae the Poundage. Dear sir - I think this ought to be Publish for E cannot Be a man that is Good for Poor People.

I remain, yours truly, An Elector.

Stone himself seems to have referred to the enclosure scheme only once, in an election address at the end of June, when he insisted that the measure was supported by both the Bishop of Winchester and virtually all the Copyhold tenants, in fact:

There were only two ladies (and these were interested only to a small extent) who had opposed it, the whole of the other parties agreeing that it would be a general benefit to the whole neighbourhood... All the parties would receive compensation, some in money, some in land.

To a certain extent the enclosure was becoming something of a hot potato and in the same address he rebuffed the charge of hypocrisy over the matter of enclosure by saying:

When a man came forward and professed to support certain principles, and said he intended to support measures which should be for the benefit of all classes, if it could be shown that in his private capacity, in the disposition of his own property and in his dealing with his neighbours, he was acting contrary to those principles, and in a spirit of harshness and oppression, then those to whom he appealed for support, would be justified before they gave their votes.

Hampshire Telegraph 1 July 1865

However the most comprehensive and robust defence of his conduct came from the Havant solicitor, Charles Longcroft, in his letter to the Liberal-supporting *Hampshire Telegraph* on 1 July 1865 already alluded to:

The Enclosure of Havant Ticket

To the Editor of the Hampshire Telegraph

Sir, - I take no part in the Portsmouth election, but the assertions in "Facts for Working Men," so far as they refer to the enclosure of Havant Thicket are so unfair to Mr Stone that I trouble you with the following explanation:-

The manor of Havant comprises certain wastes, the principal of which is Havant-thicket, containing about 800 statute acres. The soil belongs to Mr Stone as Lord, the timber to the Bishop of Winchester, and the pasturage to the ancient copyholders of the manors of Havant and Flood.

For a long time past, and for reasons which require no comment from me, the copyholders have desired to enclose the wastes. Some years ago I presented a requisition to Sir George Staunton, the then Lord, on behalf of the copyholders, praying for enclosure. Sir George demanded a much larger allotment than the copyholders were willing to give, and consequence the negotiations fell through.

Other negotiations were subsequently entered into, but the claims of Sir George Staunton and the Bishop were still excessive, and the matter again dropped.

Things so remained until the purchase of the manors by Mr Stone. A communication was then made by his agent to me that he would consent to an enclosure on terms which were then discussed; and in order to assist to those whom money was greater value than an allotment at a distance from their property. Mr Stone offered in the event of enclosure, to purchase all such allotments at a fair valuation. The matter was taken in by copyholders, the terms were satisfactory, and ultimately the Lord, Bishop, and the copyholders came into an arrangement in every way desirable for all parties, and the enclosure is at present moment being carried out by a legally appointed valuer, under the authority of the Enclosure Commissioners. Every person having a right of pasturage on the wastes, and making a claim, will be entitled to an allotment or to the value of that allotment in money, at his option.

The owners of houses and buildings with mere gardens attached are not, by the custom of the manors, entitled to any allotment or compensation; but as the copyholders had met the wishes of Mr Stone in a liberal spirit he voluntarily offered, at his own cost and with further consideration, to enfranchise the houses and tenements within the manors. The claims for enfranchisement have accordingly been made, and the deeds converting the copyholds into freeholds will shortly be executed. In furtherance of the proceedings the thicket was closed by the official valuer, and not by Mr Stone.

No ancient footway has been stopped, but unnecessary trackways through the thicket have been stopped by the valuer and copyholders, and not by Mr Stone.

The valuer, with the assent of Mr Stone and the copyholders, has set out through the thicket, a road of thirty feet wide from Ryder's-lane to Hoskiss-hill, which will be a great convenience to the public.

Cattle have been impounded, but the order for closing the thicket and warning trespassers was affixed to the doors of all the places of public worship within the parishes of Havant and Hayling before the thicket was closed; and the impounding was the act of the valuer, and not that of Mr Stone.

I speak from personal knowledge of the facts, and am, Sir, Your Obedient Servant,

Charles John Longcroft

Havant, 29 June, 1865

Nevertheless, the charge that a poor woman's cow had been seized and then sold when she could not pay for its release was never disputed and is therefore most likely true, and Stone was even heckled about this when he made an appearance at one of the polling booths in Portsmouth on election-day. He was also, as will be evident later, somewhat premature in his closing of the Thicket.

These might seem like comparatively trivial matters, but the enclosure of commons and the loss of public access to them was a particularly contentious issue in the mid-1860s. Indeed in the very month that the election was contested the Commons Preservation Society was formed, primarily to oppose the widespread encroachment into common land around London - most notably in Epping Forest - which would lead to the passing of the Metropolitan Commons Act (protecting all common land within a 50 mile radius of large urban areas) in 1866. It was in 1866, too, that the New Forest Association was formed, in response to the controversial decision to enclose 10,000 acres of common land there.

But if his conduct over Havant Thicket did have any adverse impact upon Stone's vote it could scarcely have been significant, for he topped the poll with 2,184 votes.

By the beginning of August 1865 Pink had completed his provisional assessment of the various claims for compensation over the loss of commoners' rights and the details of his awards were deposited at the Bear Inn for public inspection, with any objections to his assessments to be submitted in writing by 25 August. Two months later another meeting was held at the Bear for *examination and determining claims of all concerned parties*, and the following April a revised schedule of assessments was issued.

The picture of near-perfect unanimity and legal probity regarding the enclosure of the Thicket that Stone and Longcroft had painted during the 1865 election campaign is somewhat undermined by what next transpired, for on 26 May 1866 a meeting was held (again at the Bear):

To consider the unsatisfactory proceedings which have taken place on the waste of Havant Thicket by reason of encroachment and enclosure of a large portion of the said waste by Mr Stone without the authority of the Valuer.

The Revd Barton took the chair, but before the meeting (which was attended by about seven or eight Copyholders) could commence Mr Appleby, the Fareham solicitor who was representing Stone, objected to the presence of the press and had them removed, leaving us frustratingly deprived of any further information.

Indeed we hear nothing more of the enclosure scheme for another year, but on 11 April 1867 a further meeting between the Valuer and the Copyholders was held at which almost all of the outstanding disagreements must have been resolved because on 3 June a legal document was signed by about 90 of Stone's Copyhold tenants relating to: *Relinquishment of rights of common by customary tenants of the Manors of Havant and Flood to Stone in Havant Thicket*. (HRO 102M86/236)

Each tenant had been allotted a nominal parcel of land within the Thicket, its size reflecting Pink's assessment of the value of their commoners' rights, and once these had been agreed Stone began the lengthy process of buying up these allotments, some of them for considerable sums. James Gloyne, for instance, received £125; Charles Longcroft £215; Samuel Clarke £400 and Mary Hewett £638 1s. 5d. (£638.07). The largest sum was paid jointly to Mary Ann Rogers and Joseph Gadman of £950. (HRO 102M 86/238)

By the time Stone had to defend his Portsmouth seat in the General Election of November 1868 (which he did successfully) the enclosure of the Thicket had ceased to be a contentious issue, and was not raised once during the campaign, but in fact it was not until 1870 that he completed his purchase of all the plots in the Thicket and it legally became his private domain.

Perhaps a word should be said regarding the enclosure of other common lands in the parishes of Havant and Hayling Island. An order was made in 1864 for the enclosure of 891.40 acres of common land in the parishes of Havant and North Hayling. Under this order 886 acres of enclosed common land were shared among 35 allottees as 'awards' of which William Stone received 727 acres (82% of the total, mainly made up of Havant Thicket). It is important to note that various commoners received a share of the land in proportion to their forfeited right over it. However, Stockheath Common, which was included within the 'award' made to Stone, came with the following condition from the commissioner:

And I declare that with the approbation of the Inclosure Commissioners for England and Wales I have set out and do hereby set out and allot and award to William Henry Stone of Leigh Park, Havant, Esquire who has consented to receive the same as part of his allotment. All that piece or parcel of land numbered 66 in the parish of Havant on the said map containing eight acres subject to the obligation of preserving the surface thereof in good condition and of permitting the same to be at all times used for exercise and recreation by the inhabitants of the said parish and neighbourhood. And I direct that fences of the southeast and southwest sides of such allotment shall from time to time be repaired and maintained by and at the expense of the owner thereof for the time being.

This provision, which remains to this day, was no doubt made in recognition that Stockheath Common was already being used for recreational purposes, in particular for cricket, but as we shall see Stone's own cricket pitch at Front Lawn was by this date becoming the favoured choice of venue by Havant cricket club.

Prior to the enclosure of Stockheath Common an interesting case occurred in August 1864 regarding the licensing of the Cricketers beer house at Stockheath whilst Stone was sitting on the magisterial bench. The landlord of the Cricketers, Thomas Tribe, was applying for a spirit licence for the public house and appeared to have had a good case for a licence, stating that there was no licenced house at Stockheath. It was also stated that Stockheath was the resort of many picnic parties during the summer months.

Stone, in his capacity of magistrate, asked if the applicant was aware *'that it was about to be enclosed, and that, therefore, there would be the less prospect of parties visiting it?'* Mr Field, acting as solicitor for Thomas Tribe presumed that there would be some portion of it reserved for the public in which Stone replied that there would be a few acres which would not be enclosed. It was then remarked that *the enclosure would eventually lead to additional building, inasmuch as the ground would then probably be disposed of for that purpose.* The chairman of the bench, John Deverell intimated that the reverse was the fact and stated that the whole had been bought by Mr Stone. After some consultation the magistrates expressed a desire to consider the application privately, and it was no surprise when the application was refused.

William Stone – Patron & Benefactor

For a man who was only at Leigh Park for a relatively short time William Stone certainly left his mark in one way or another, and that is still seen to today. With his role as a magistrate for Hampshire, he was appointed on 19 September 1863, and also being elected M.P. for Portsmouth, brought extra responsibilities and this was seen at both Leigh Park and in the wider neighbourhood. Luckily, today signs of his benevolence still survive with the buildings of the Town Hall, now the Spring Arts and Heritage Centre in Havant and Bedhampton School in Bedhampton, along with the many allotments in New Lane which bear his name.

Opening the Park and Gardens

As far as Leigh Park was concerned, Stone, the enclosure hullabaloo notwithstanding, opened his gardens for the wider public to visit and enjoy. From 1864 the gardens were opened to the public on special holidays, such as Coronation Day, of which fell on 28 June, and Whit Monday on a regular basis. Annually a fete was held, but not always with a smooth outcome as of the first visit of the Portsmouth Ebenezer Temperance Society on Coronation Day 1864 proved. This must have been such a special day as between 600 and 700 carriages were put on for between 11,000 and 12,000 people from Portsmouth who had arrived at Rowlands Castle by train for the fete. Unfortunately, allegations of admission charging reared its ugly head and letters to the editor of the *Hampshire Telegraph* were written by both Stone and the committee of the Temperance Society to put the matter right:

The Temperance Fete in Leigh Park

To the Editor of the Hampshire Telegraph

Sir, - In answer to various enquiries will you allow me to state in your columns that the charge for admission to Leigh Park on the coronation-day, reported to have been made by some of the party who had come there by my invitation, was made wholly without my knowledge, and contrary to my wishes.

I remain,

Your obedient servant

W. H. Stone

Dulwich Hill, 30 June, 1864

The Temperance Society in their defence for charging an admission fee and exonerating Stone of any blame stated in their letter to the *Hampshire Telegraph* on 2 July:

'The committee of the Portsmouth Ebenezer Temperance Society being anxious to gather their friends together, and at the same time, assist their Society's funds, and thinking that Leigh Park

would be a somewhat central spot and place of considerable attraction to their friends and the public, they made application by letter to W.H. Stone, Esq., the present proprietor, asking for the exclusive use of the said park and grounds for Coronation day for the benefit of the temperance society. Mr Stone, in reply, courteously expressed his readiness to comply with the committee's request. On the reception of this letter the committee immediately made the necessary arrangements, securing a special train etc. In order to reimburse themselves for various matters of outlay, such as booth, band, printing, etc., the committee made a small charge for admission to the park, viz: adults, 6d., children, 3d. : a course of conduct frequently done elsewhere under similar circumstances, and which the committee believed they were fully warranted in going in this case. It appears, however, that some persons who went to the park and had to pay for admission were displeased thereat, and since made a complaint on this point to Mr Stone, he stated that while he cheerfully gave sanction to the temperance committee to the use of his park for the fete, it was not in his thoughts at the time that any charge would be made for admission. We therefore, desire herewith to state our regret that we have in anyway acted other than Mr Stone designed, but we conscientiously aver that we had every belief our course of conduct was in perfect harmony with his intentions, and if any portion of the public have been pained at the small charge made for admission, the blame does not in any way rest with Mr Stone but with us, out of our misconception.'

The following year on Coronation Day, 1865 the park and gardens were opened to hold a fete on behalf of the Juvenile Foresters' Society. Relations between Stone and the Portsmouth Ebenezer Temperance Society could not have been soured too much as in 1867 and 1868 the society held further fetes at Leigh Park on Coronation Day, an event which was to become an annual affair.

The problem, as we have seen in the year of 1864 was the vast numbers of people visiting the park on open days. It appeared that in 1865 the numbers again were very high and in this year Stone actually threw his gardens open to the public, virtually without restriction. This bold gesture which proved immensely popular, some cynics could say was possibly to coincide with his election campaign. The next year was different and Stone went to the lengths of trying to limit the numbers through the gates into the gardens. In May 1866 he had printed in the local press rules for admission and as he stated in the press: *'it will save my gardener a great deal of time and trouble, and will I hope, not materially restrict the convenience of those who may wish to visit my grounds.'*

The report went on to say that the gardens will be open on fixed dates, on the first and third Monday of the month and that admission will be by tickets, which may be had at various hotels in Portsmouth and Southsea and the Bear Hotel in Havant. It went on to say that:

The admission regulations could not have restricted people and numbers too much for in 1866 it is recorded that:

On 'Whit Monday in the present year no fewer 20,000 persons visited the grounds, whilst on Coronation Day (28 June 1866) the number present was about 14,000.' Stone even wrote to the Hampshire Telegraph in praise of the *'orderly behaviour of the large number of persons assembled'*:

The Foresters' Fete at Leigh Park on Coronation Day – "The Amalgamated Fete Committee" have received the following letter from Mr Stone, M.P. :-

Dear Sir, - I have received the kind letter and resolution of the committee of the Ancient Order of Foresters of the Portsmouth District. I am very much pleased to hear that the members of your society enjoyed their day in my grounds, and in return I am very glad to hear the highest possible testimony to the orderly behaviour of the large number of persons assembled on that occasion. I am glad to say that, as far as I know, no damage whatever was done to any part of my grounds; and it always gives me great pleasure when I am able to afford any gratification to the inhabitants of Portsmouth.

I remain yours obediently

W.H. Stone

Dulwich Hill, 24 July 1866

As well as these large scale visits to Leigh Park the gardens were opened at time for smaller groups such as Sunday School outings from Portsmouth and also specific schools themselves, one such being a visit by children of the Hebrew Schools in Portsmouth on 15 August 1870. Another example of a visit to Leigh Park is from the *Hampshire Telegraph* of 24 July 1869:

Annual Excursion, - The members and friends of the Portsea Island Young Men's Christian Association held their annual excursion on Tuesday, at Leigh Park. By the kind permission of W.H. Stone, Esq. M.P., and the exertions of Mr Young, head-gardener, tea was provided in the gardens, and the use of the library granted for the occasion. Invitations were sent to the respective societies at Ryde, Gosport, and Fareham. After tea various sports were indulged in, and the friends retired at a reasonable hour, having spent a day of rational enjoyment not to be forgotten.

Most interesting was Whit Monday, 1871 when the local press reported a 'large gathering of Druids at Leigh Park.'! This was the United Ancient Order of Druids and it was further reported that between 1,200 and 1,800 had tickets for the event. On Whit Monday in June 1873, saw one of the last holidays in which Stone opened up the grounds before his departure from Leigh Park when a 'Grand Amalgamated Fete and Gala of Foresters and Druids' was held. Again several trains ran from Portsmouth and 4,000 tickets were issued and as the local press reported:

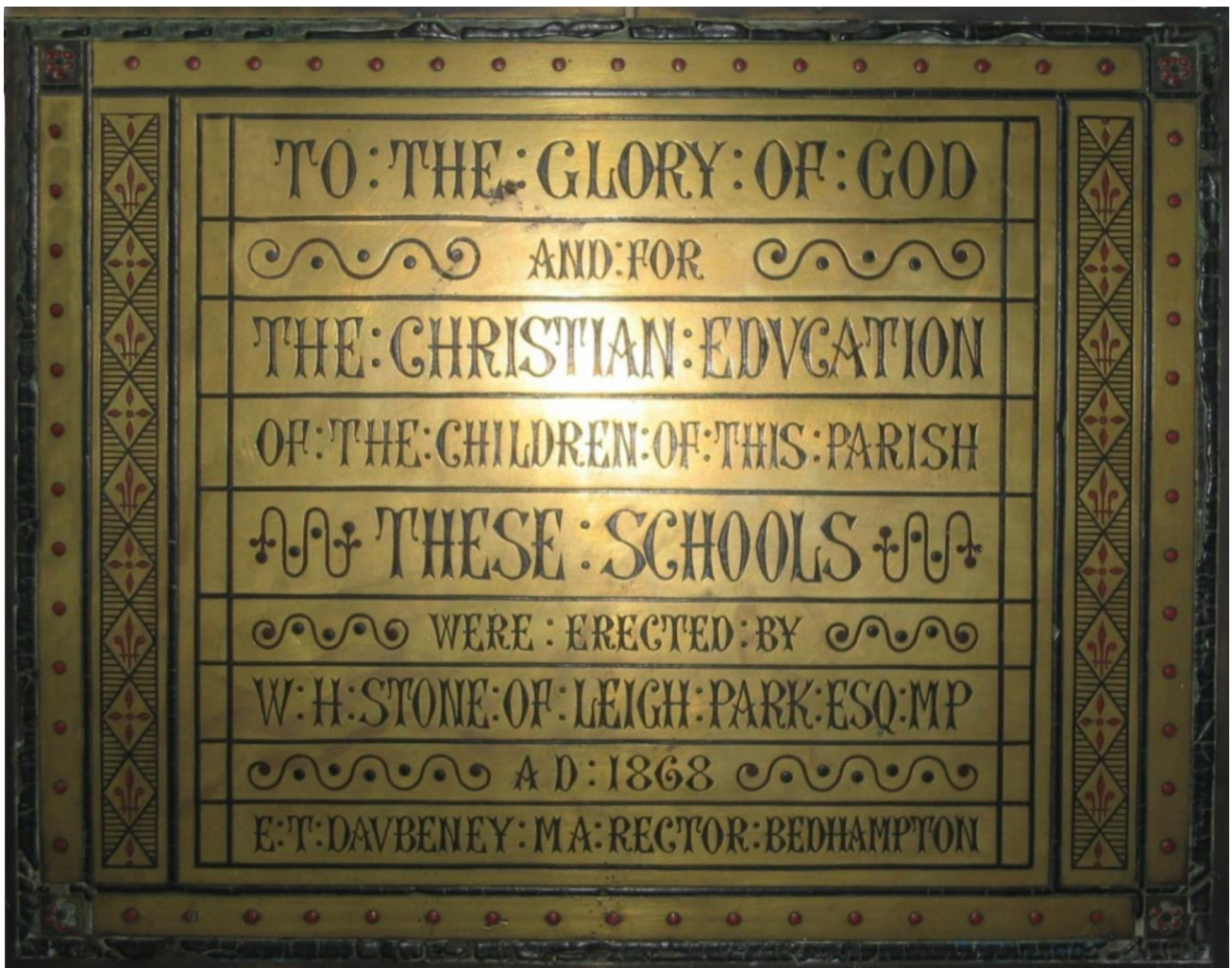
Those possessing no desire to engage in any of the numerous amusements wandered through the gardens and conservatories, which had been liberally thrown open on the occasion, and we have no doubt the attention paid by the crowds of the visitors to the valuable English and exotic specialities, and to the warnings of the large number of Mr Stone's workmen, who politely, yet firmly, interfered whenever they saw anything to justify interference, will have the effect of inducing that gentleman to continue to afford the people of Portsmouth and the surrounding neighbourhood, the opportunity of visiting his seat, and enjoying rambles through his well appointed gardens and greenhouses. The flowers did not appear so thoroughly forward as they were this time last year, but they still looked beautiful and their delicious fragrance pervaded the whole of the grounds. The large and carpet-like lawn was taken advantage of by a large number of the visitors as a resting place, and the beautiful prospect of the lake and island and the new drive through the wood was much admired by all. Hampshire Telegraph, 4 June 1873

Bedhampton School

Bedhampton School owes its origin to two men, namely the Revd St. John Alder, former Rector of Bedhampton, and William Stone. At his death in 1864 the Rev Alder left a legacy towards the cost of erecting schools for the parish. This amounted to £101 0s. 9d. and was paid to William Henry Stone on 18 March 1868. The reason for this was that Stone was providing the rest of the money towards the new school and also providing the land which it would be built on.

The architect chosen was Richard William Drew, who designed Leigh Park House, and no doubt the bricks were made at the brick yard at Leigh Park. The design of the building reflects closely to both the style of the Town Hall in Havant and even has a passing look of Leigh Park House about it. It was built on the corner of Bedhampton Road and Kingscroft Lane, the contractor being Mr Stallard, carpenter and builder of Havant. The school officially opened on 16 March 1868 with 73 children admitted and the building was enlarged in 1873 at a cost of £376. It was further enlarged in 1895 to hold 185 children.

On 10 October 1868 a committee was appointed for the management of the school under the chairmanship of the Rev. Edmund Dauneny, along with William Stone and other local landowners. In 1870 a new Elementary Education Act was passed, and it became necessary for a School Board to be formed, and William Stone agreed to lease the school to the Board for 500 years at a nominal annual rent of five shillings. The school closed in 1985 and subsequently became the Bedhampton Arts Centre but now has been converted to stylish apartments and extra housing has also been built on the site. The main building has been designated a Grade II listed building.



Plaque in Bedhampton School, 1868



The former Bedhampton School, photographed when it was used as an Art Centre

The Town Hall, Havant



Havant Arts Centre, formerly the Town Hall, the original hall can still be seen

Havant, in common with many small market towns, held a great variety of public events and social gatherings in the many inns that dotted the town. In 1867 proposals were put into place for a new cattle market and a town hall for Havant. The new town hall would become a public hall for both the social and entertainment wants of the town and also later serve as the administrative centre for the town.

On 22 October 1868 the Havant Town Hall Company Ltd was formed under the chairmanship of William Stone and a group of twelve directors with Charles Longcroft as Solicitor. William Stone contributed £500 to the cause with a further amount totaling £2,000 raised in 400 £5 shares. In 1869 the company purchased for £150 a plot of land, part of the large East Town's End Field, owned by Richard Scott, situated at the corner of the Retreat (Town Hall Road) and the former Turnpike Road (East Street), close to the new Hayling Branch Line Railway.

Richard William Drew, again was commissioned to draw up plans for the new building. The building work started in late 1869 and the work was finished by the end of January 1870 at a cost of £1,500. The building, in brick, stone and tile was built in the pseudo-Gothic style and has a strong resemblance to Drew's other design, Leigh Park House. No doubt, again the bricks and tiles were made at the brick yard at Leigh Park. The builders being John and Mark Hillary of Andover.

Inside the 85ft by 45ft building was a hall, 55ft by 22ft. with a gallery seating 300 and a large movable stage, the hall still survives today. On 28 January 1870 a grand concert was performed for the official opening of the hall. Thereafter, the hall was used for public meetings, lectures, flower and pet shows, auctions, wedding receptions etc. It was also housed an armoury for the Havant Volunteers and acted as the headquarters for the Havant and Emsworth Volunteer Rifle Corps (4th Hants).

In 1901 the Havant Town Hall Company was wound up and the Town Hall was purchased for £1,200 ironically by Sir Frederick Fitzwygram of Leigh Park, the same gentleman who acquired the Leigh Park Estate after the sale in 1874 by William Stone. Sir Frederick enlarged the building adding further accommodation and a drill hall. In 1921 it was purchased by Havant Urban District who in 1946 acquired Moorlands (formerly Havant Museum), the building next door and added that to the Town Hall. It remained the administrative headquarters of Havant until 1974 when a new civic centre was built on the north of the town centre. Today it is part of the Spring Arts and Heritage Centre but enough of the original hall survives.

Patronage

With being an M.P. this brought other obligations for Stone and he became patron of many organisations, especially in Portsmouth. Examples of this can be found with his patronage of the Albert Cottage Almshouses in Milton, Portsmouth, for aged members of Friendly Societies in Portsmouth; the Hampshire School and House for the Blind in Park Lane, Southsea; South of England Horticultural and Floricultural Society, and because of his interest in cricket the South East Hants Cricket Club who no doubt played some of their matches at Leigh Park. He was also patron of the Portsmouth Ornithological and Zoological Society.

Another sign of William Stone's goodwill and generosity was the endowment of six scholarships to Portsmouth Grammar School where Stone was one of four co-opted Governors of the school. But perhaps the greatest gift of patronage by William Stone actually happened after he left Leigh Park and is still in existence today. On 28 September 1876 he gave in trust a 5 acre field known as Lower New Lane Field:

'Upon trust for the encouragement of the good and careful cultivation of land by persons of the labouring classes resident in the parish of Havant and providing out of the land hereby conveyed so far as the same will extend small plots of land for persons of the laboring classes resident in Havant who may be willing to take them at a fair rent.'



Stone's Trust Estate Allotments, New Lane, Havant, 2016

The rents and profits from the allotments were to be used for the upkeep of the land and any other profit would be used as prizes for the allotment holders. The allotments are now still held in trust with three trustees managing them. On 25 March 1895 the Urban District Council of Havant entered into an agreement with the trustees to exchange 1 acre 3 roods and 8 poles of the allotment site for a similar area of land to the north of the allotment site to enable the cemetery in New Lane to be extended.

The cynics among us can point to the enclosure of Havant Thicket which in all sense and purpose became Stone's private playground, and maybe the allotments, as well as being a parting gift to the people of Havant, were additional compensation for the closing of the Thicket.

William Stone MP. The 1868 Portsmouth Election

The General Election of 1868 was the first election after the passage of the Reform Act of 1867, which enfranchised many male householders, thus greatly increasing the number of men who could vote in elections in the United Kingdom. It was the first election held in the United Kingdom in which more than a million votes were cast; nearly triple the number of votes were cast compared to the previous election. In Portsmouth for example the total votes cast was increased by 70 per cent.

Prior to the new election on 18 November 1868 Stone had only spoken four times in the House before it was dissolved on 11 November 1868, and this shows that he was not a prominent parliamentary figure. As a biography, written after his death, stated of his time as an M.P he:

'...amply justified the confidence which was reposed in him by his electors. He was not by any means what could be called a "showy member", for he never considered it part of his vocation to be constantly occupied in adding his quota to the interminable flow of "words, words, words", which ascend daily into the empyrean from the floor of the Lower House of Legislation. Yet when he felt that the occasion warranted it, he was never at a loss in a point of oratorical power. A crisp and

epigrammatical speaker, he could hit hard when he liked, and he also knew how to pay a graceful compliment. He was always perfectly fearless in his remarks, yet thoroughly fair, and no one was more anxious than he that his opponent should have a good chance of obtaining an impartial hearing.'

The County of Surrey with Illustrated Biographies, 1896

In his address to the electors, printed in the *Hampshire Telegraph*, he did highlight some of the national problems that were taxing the government at the time but one point he highlighted was the *measures for the improvement and extension of public education, particularly of the poorer classes*. This was something Stone was a great believer in and during the few times he did speak in the House education was one of the subjects he spoke on. We have seen his benevolence towards the new school at Bedhampton, and the scholarships he provided at Portsmouth Grammar School and he was a supporter of the new Purbrook Industrial School which was set up in 1868. It was said of him that *"the question of education had always possessed great interest for Mr Stone, for he held that it is one of the most important of all time."* On a broader level he was a governor of his old school of Harrow School, also of Dulwich College and was deputy chairman of the Board in each case. He was also governor of the Central Foundation Schools, London.

To the Electors of the Borough of Portsmouth

Gentlemen, - During the three sessions of Parliament, of which I have had the honour of representing you I have to the best of my ability, discharged the trust committed to me in the accordance with the principles which I have always professed.

For a considerable portion of this time the Government has unfortunately, as I think, been in the hands of a Conservative minority; but the Liberal party have nevertheless been able greatly to influence the course of legislation.

The abolition of compulsory Church Rates, and of flogging in the Army, may be instanced as measures carried by us in spite of strenuous opposition.

The Reform Act of 1867, though inadequate in its redistribution of seats, and encumbered by unnecessary and mischievous disturbance of our rating system, was yet a grand triumph of Liberal principles. It should never be forgotten that this measure, as enlarged and approved by the House of Commons, has hardly anything in common with the unsatisfactory Bill brought by the Government.

The feebleness of the Scotch, and particularly of the Irish, Reform Acts shows the disadvantage of the legislation under a Government unable to enforce its own ideas, and unwilling frankly to adopt those of others.

The proposed annexation of Gosport to Portsmouth would have unjustly diminished your share of electoral power; and my colleague and I successfully opposed it before the Select Committee.

I have deeply regretted the distress caused by the extensive discharge of Dockyard artisans. While admitting that this measure may have been to some extent unavoidable, I cannot but think that a little forethought might have greatly mitigated the severity of its effects.

The present and most unsatisfactory relations between the people of Ireland and the Government make it the first duty of our statesmen to seek for the causes of dissatisfaction and their remedies. I consider that a Church Establishment maintained by the state for the religion of a small minority is a real and reasonable ground of discontent. To prove this it seems only necessary to imagine a similar institution maintained in England under similar circumstances.

I earnestly desire the spread of Protestantism in Ireland, and I am a sincere friend to the Church of England: I do not believe that the one will be checked or the other endangered by the

disestablishment of the Irish Church; and I regard the cries of "No Popery" and "The Church of England in danger" as altogether inappropriate at the present crisis.

I intend to offer myself to you for re-election, in conjunction with my present colleague with whom I have happily been able to agree on almost all important questions. If I am again honoured by your confidence, I shall continue in the course which I have hitherto followed; and shall give an independent but decided support to the great Statesman who now heads the Liberal party.

Measures for the improvement and extension of public education, particularly of the poorer classes; for nationalising our great Universities; for the fairer adjustment of the burdens of local taxation; for greater economy in our national expenditure; improved administration of the poor rates, reform of the great administrative departments of Government, and for many other useful ends, will probably be brought before the new Parliament, and will have my zealous support, in furtherance of the two great objects, individual liberty and national progress.

I am Gentlemen, Your Obedient Servant,

W.H. Stone, Leigh Park, 15 August 1868

The Liberals under William Gladstone duly won the election with the Liberals strengthening their control over Ireland. At Portsmouth, it was a different matter, Sir James Elphinstone, who lost his seat as a conservative in the previous election, swept back in at the top of the poll with William Stone in second place, Stone's former colleague Stephen Gaselee came third and lost his seat. Elphinstone, who was standing as a lone conservative polled 5,276 votes with Stone polling 3,797 and Gaselee 3,703.

Stone in his address to the Liberal Electors of Portsmouth blamed his poor showing on the amount of new voters voting for the first time due to the Reform Bill, which he indeed voted for in parliament. He remarked from Leigh Park a day after the election:

I feel the deepest regret, in common with every true Liberal, at the severe defeat which our party has sustained in the borough. Instead of advancing, with the rest of England, Portsmouth has, for the time at least, taken a step backward. I believe one of the principal causes of this misfortune to have been the immense advantage gained by our opponents from their early canvass of the new voters. I sincerely trust the Liberal party may be able to take such measures as may prevent their being at this disadvantage in future and that but few years may pass before Portsmouth shall win back the character, which she has enjoyed for so many years, of a truly Liberal borough.

Alas, his last remark would unfortunately not come true for nearly twenty years.

So what of Stone's voice in parliament? He was a diligent member and his record was exemplary for attending the House and voting on various Bills. Examples of this can be seen when he voted in favour of the Bill to legitimise the marriage with a deceased wife's sister and he also voted in favour of the proposal to admit nonconformists to divinity degrees in Universities. Surprisingly, in April 1870, he voted against permitting Nonconformist ministers to read the burial service in churchyards. This last bill Stone actually sat on the Select Committee stage looking into this proposal.

He also presented petitions in the House, one being very close to his heart, being in favour of exempting Sunday and Ragged Schools from the payment of rates. In April 1869, along with Col Sir Walter Barttelot, the member for Arundel, he presented a petition against the abolition of imprisonment for debt.

Nationally he was a great supporter of William Gladstone and supported Gladstone's resolution for the disestablishment of the Irish Church and against the disestablishment of the English Church. He also sat on the committee regarding the passing of W.E. Forster's 1870 Education Act. In April 1872 he voted

against an amendment to make changes to the act. He also sat as a member of the General Committee on Railway and Canal Bills.

More locally he did stand up for Portsmouth, especially with reduction of the Government Dockyards which affected Portsmouth with men being discharged and made destitute due to the depression in the ship building trade. Stone even petitioned the First Lord of the Admiralty on the memorials the men received, some complaining that the wording in the memorials made them out to be either incompetent workmen or of indifferent character, meaning they were unable to find work. The First Lord of the Admiralty, Hugh Childers MP, replied that *'he would be sorry to have used any language detrimental to the prospects of the men who have been or may be discharged, and he is not aware he has done so'*.

In April 1872, during the debate on Navy Estimates, Stone expressed concerns over the proposals to close Portsmouth Naval College and establish a Naval College at Greenwich, a matter that had been rumbling on since October 1869. The Royal Naval College at Portsmouth was established in Portsmouth Dockyard in 1733 to train officers for the Royal Navy. The college closed as a young officer training establishment in 1837 meaning that from that date all youngsters setting out on a naval career proceeded directly to sea but the college was still used as a place of examinations and was still in use by the Royal Navy. A new Royal Navy College was built at Greenwich in 1873 and served as the home of the Royal Navy's staff college, which provided advanced training for officers until its closure in 1998.

The annual Navy Estimates were always a concern for Portsmouth and Stone always gave his backing to the Dockyard workers, be it as we have seen during the reduction of workers due to the depression of the ship building trade, or when he gave them his backing in their fight for increased wages. In June 1873 due to the Navy Estimates the Dockyard artisans were finally given increased pay and were thankful to the part Stone played in this:



Photograph of William Henry Stone, undated, probably dating to around his period as a Member of Parliament

The artisans, and indeed the general public, will be glad to hear that Mr W.H. Stone, M.P., and Mr J.D. Lewis, M.P., have been most energetic in their support of the case of the Dockyardmen. Deputations have been received, correspondence with the Admiralty authorities has been carried, and every step taken by the Hon. Gentlemen to place before their Lordships at Whitehall, every fact which could throw light on the question. And Dockyard artisans are not slow to appreciate assistance of this kind. Hampshire Telegraph, 4 June 1873

In February 1873 the *Illustrated London News* ran an article on William Stone, along with a line drawing of him which for many years was the only known portrait of him. The article reporting on his political career recorded Stone as:

...a steady Liberal voting generally, if not always, with the present Government. As a member he has been generally unobtrusive seldom, if ever, originating any motions of his own or amendments in measures, but he is understood to be a very good 'business member' as the phrase goes.

Also in February 1873 Stone seconded the address in answer to the Queen's Speech, read in the Queen's absence by the Lord Chancellor in the Commons at the Opening of Parliament. The address was moved by the Hon. C.G. Lyttleton and seconded by Stone, as some have said the highlight of his political career. This was followed by a dinner given by W.E. Gladstone, the Prime Minister, at his residence on Carlton House Terrace.

Leading up to the election in February 1874 not every Liberal supporter in Portsmouth was happy with the way the party was going and even to a certain degree the part Stone was playing locally as one ardent Liberal supporter bemoaned in the *Hampshire Telegraph* on 7 June 1873:

The Political Situation

Sir, - Will you allow me, through the medium of your columns, to ask the President, Secretary, or any of the officers of the Liberal Association, what they are doing or trying to do to turn the scales at the coming election? Surely it is time something was being done, unless we make up our minds for our opponents to have everything their own way. I have been expecting for some time that the name of a gentleman would have been made public who was prepared to fight the Liberal battle in this Liberal Borough in consort with Mr Stone, but nothing has been done. Perhaps our leaders are asleep; if so. I can only tell them the opposite party are not even dosing, but are continually holding meetings, sometimes in back streets and lanes. I should also like to ask when we may anticipate the pleasure of hearing our respected member, W.H. Stone, Esq., address his constituents? I for one, and I am not alone, should like to hear his opinion upon some of the questions of the day, such as "The Abolition of the Game Laws," "Land Tenure Reform," "The Criminal Law Amendment Act," and "The Equalization of Poor Rates." In conclusion, Sir, I verily believe that this Borough is essentially a Liberal one, and should we again be unsuccessful, the blame will most assuredly rest with those who take the lead in political matters.

I am, Sir, yours etc.

An Ardent Liberal

If only our ardent Liberal knew what the forthcoming election would bring! Stone duly addressed the Liberal Association on 9 July 1873 where in a long speech he described what the Liberal Government had done in past year such as the disestablishment of the Irish Church, the Reform of the People's Act, and the Education Act of 1870 of which he was a great supporter and also of Army reform. Locally he mentioned the endowment of Portsmouth Grammar School and also the work carried out on behalf of the Dockyard men. At the end of the meeting Mr Alderman Emanuel moved the following resolution:

That this meeting tender their hearty thanks to W.H. Stone, Esq., M.P., for his able address this evening. They also take this opportunity of expressing their approval of the straightforward and consistent course he has pursued in Parliament, and the attention he has at all times devoted to the local interests of this borough – more especially his exertions in furtherance of the rating of

Government property, in support of the memorials from the employees in H.M. Dockyard for an increase of pay, and from the Greenwich out-pensioners for an alteration in the scale of pensions.

Hampshire Telegraph, 12 July 1873

The resolution was unanimously agreed to.

William Stone – Man of Scientist, Invention and a Captain of Militia

As expected of a highly educated man William Stone had numerous interests outside of politics and business. We have already noted his interest in sport, especially cricket, and also his interest in education for all classes but it appears another passion was science and especially astronomy. He was a member and later president of the Portsea Island Society for the Culture of Science and Literature and produced papers as well as giving lectures to the society. Examples of this include a paper and lecture on “sleep” given in January 1873. Other topics included papers and lectures on the Sun and the planet Venus and other astronomical subjects and also advances made in modern science.

More importantly was an ingenious invention by Stone of a plan for watering cattle during their transit by railway:

Mr W.H. Stone as an Inventor

Although the invention is at present in an incomplete state, it gives us much pleasure to announce our member, Mr W.H. Stone, as the inventor of a plan for watering cattle during their transit by railway. Though by an Act passed last session of Parliament railway companies are compelled to provide water for animals on the request of the consignor, yet from the trouble which is involved under the existing arrangements the cattle during their transportation from place to place are frequently neglected, and a great amount of suffering ensues. The great merit of Mr Stone's invention consists in the fact that it utilises the ordinary cattle trucks, which can be made available at a small cost. Mr Spencer Smith, engineer, Holborn, London, has carried out the plans of Mr Stone, and on Wednesday week a trial took place at the Holloway Station of the Great Northern Railway. The apparatus was tested with the sanction of the committee which is now enquiring into the subject of feeding and watering of cattle on journeys under the instruction of the Privy Council, and in the presence of Professor Simonds, of the Veterinary Department, and Capt. Tyler, R.E. A cistern holding 40 gallons of water, is fixed at one end of an ordinary cattle truck (outside). Under this cistern is fixed a small supply cistern, to which are attached pipes running up the sides of the truck. On each side are five outlets to the pipes, to which india-rubber pipes are fixed, and attached to these are round tin pans, of ten inches in diameter, and three inches in depth. When the cattle require to be watered these pans are placed on the floor of the truck. This is done from the outside, there being sufficient room for them to pass between the floor and the lower rail. The water is then turned on from the upper cistern, and having risen to a proper height in the pans, is shut off by a ball valve. As the cattle drink the water keeps running in, the ball valve preventing it from flowing over. The cattle having been watered, the pans are taken out, and hung up outside the truck, sufficiently high to keep the india-rubber pipes quite tight. Although the subject is still under the discussion of the committee, yet as friends of the beast, we hail with satisfaction every movement calculated to alleviate the suffering animals undergo when travelling by railway, whether the promoter be that estimable lady Miss Burdett Coutts, or Mr Stone, who is himself a large landowner, and as a matter of course intimately connected to farmers and stockbreeders.

Hampshire Telegraph, 18 December 1869

One other surprising aspect of Stone's life at Leigh Park was his involvement as Captain and commanding officer of the 12th Sussex Rifle Volunteers, based in Westbourne in West Sussex, which was formed on 19 March 1864. He took his duties seriously with the volunteers as from this example at a dinner for the corps given at the Lamb Inn, Westbourne, on 30 November 1869 when Lieutenant Henty of the corps proposed the health of Captain Stone:

It was very fortunate for the corps that the command had been taken by Captain Stone, as at that time it was considered to be a rather critical state, and its present prosperous condition was due to his energy, zeal and exertions, in placing it second to none in the battalion. (cheers).

Captain Stone in reply, said that:

Since he had taken over the command of the corps he had always felt it a pleasure that he had never met with the slightest unpleasantness, but had had every assistance that he could have wished. He felt pride of the high character given of the corps, and he did not know how long, but hoped it might be for a long time to come: and as long as he had command it would not be his fault if the efficiency were not maintained.

Hampshire Telegraph, 1 December 1869

It was for Stone probably an escape from his role as a Member of Parliament and his day to day affairs and also in some way a form of enjoyment and relaxation. He also from time to time got involved with the Havant branch of the volunteers, the 4th Hants Rifle Volunteers, by occasionally inspecting them and providing them with funds. After Leaving Leigh Park Stone resigned his commission as commandant of the corps and was replaced by George Wilder of Stansted.

The 1874 Election and the End of an Era

Parliament was dissolved on 28 January 1874 and a new election was held on 3 February, five days later. As we have seen with the last election of 1868 the Conservatives, with Sir James Elphinstone topped the poll with Stone in second place. This election appeared to have been a more subdued affair in Portsmouth with not as much electioneering as previous elections. Stone was re-nominated to stand along with Wyndham Portal, the other Liberal candidate and he campaigned on the success of the Liberal Government over the last period of office as well as success locally for Portsmouth, especially in regard of the Dockyard.

The result of the election was a complete triumph for the Conservatives with Disraeli replacing Gladstone as Prime Minister. The national result was reflected at Portsmouth where Sir James Elphinstone again topped the poll with his colleague the Hon. Thomas Bruce in second place. Stone finished third with Portal in fourth place meaning both Liberals not being elected. The result of the poll was as follows:

Sir James Elphinstone – 5,927, Hon. Thomas Bruce – 5,879, William Stone – 4,644
Wyndham Portal – 4,588

In his farewell address to the Liberal electors of Portsmouth Stone thanked those who kindly and consistently supported him during the past eight years but unlike Elphinstone and Bruce he would not return to serve them again:

To the Liberal Electors of the Borough of Portsmouth

Gentlemen,

On public as well as personal grounds I regret the result of yesterday's Election, which has deprived me of the Honour of representing you in Parliament, and has placed the Borough for the first time in many years in the hands of the Conservative party.

It only now remains for me most heartily to thank those many friends who have so kindly and consistently supported me during the past eight years, and especially during the recent contest.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant

W.H. Stone

Portsmouth, 4 February 1874

In January 1935 an interesting article appeared in that bastion of local knowledge, the *Hampshire Telegraph*, relating to the election of 1874 and what happened in Havant. The correspondent, E.C. Bailey, was looking back at what he termed the old fashioned elections of yesterday when it was fought only between the Liberals and Conservatives and alas where rivalries and feelings ran high. It would not do the article justice if it was not recorded in full:

Memories of Havant - An Old Fashioned Election

Do we take our politics as seriously today as they did 60 years ago? At least we take them more sedately and keep personal feeling out of it almost entirely. For one thing, the difference between contending parties is not so clean cut as in the days when the issue was between Liberal and Conservative. Today we find Conservative Governments passing measures which would have left Radicals aghast 60 years ago, and certainly we do not brand fellow townsmen as rogues and vagabonds because they differ from us in politics, neither do we smash their windows, pelt them with eggs and vegetables of doubtful age, or refuse business dealings with them and treat them as pariahs, as many were treated in the past. The "great house" has not such an influence on the town's politics as in my younger days. Whatever the Squire thought, the majority in the town thought too, or for business reasons concealed their private opinions, and like the parrot thought a lot and said "nowt."

In Havant 60 years ago the Squire of Leigh Park was a Liberal, and represented Portsmouth in Parliament. Consequently the prevailing colour at election times was the Liberal Blue, and woe betide the individual who had the temerity to display the Conservative yellow. When a Conservative succeeded him at Leigh Park, I have heard that in a few years the yellow predominated, but of that I have no knowledge.

I am old enough to remember the last of the old fashioned elections; that of 1874 when Disraeli came into power, and Gladstone went into cold storage for six years and here I gave my impression of what I saw in Havant. I do not remember the Conservative candidates, but the Liberals were Cowper-Temple, a member of the Palmerston family of Romsey, and someone called Swainton. Previous to election day there was nothing doing. Most of the houses flaunted the blue posters, a few were yellow, and the only event I remember, previous to the election day, was that the Conservatives made a night raid on their opponents houses and plastered them with yellow bills. A night or two afterwards their opponents did the same, and the familiar blue appeared again.

Well the election day arrived and everyone was on tiptoe to see what would happen. Great excitement was caused by the arrival in the morning of Mr W.H. Stone from Leigh Park in style. His coach was drawn by four spanking chestnuts, the harness bedizened with blue rosettes and streamers, the coach laden with prominent Liberals with blue rosettes of enormous size, and amid the cheers of the onlookers he drove through the crowd to the Town Hall, recorded his vote and then drove off to Portsmouth to attend to his own election affairs. Two prominent Conservatives lived alongside one another at the lower end of East Street, Mr Harding, the landlord of the White Hart (not the present building but the one that stood a little way from the present site), and Mr Veal, a grocer. Both flaunted the Tory orange colour to the disgust of their Liberal friends.

A crowd had gathered in front of their shops, for a time content with good humoured banter, but as usually happens someone threw something, and in a few minutes the windows were covered with mud, and the unfortunate owners were treated to bad eggs, flour and decayed vegetables. Harding managed to shut and bar his doors, poor old Veal was not quick enough. His windows were smashed, his door battered in, he was smothered in filth, and his stock in trade ruined.

Naturally their Tory friends came to their aid, and in a very short time, the first two victims were forgotten, and a free fight was going on in the roadway. Numerically inferior, they were not dismayed, though beaten. Someone chartered a brake and drove over to Emsworth and came back with reinforcements in the shape of a body of fishermen, who were probably willing to fight under any banner if it were made their while. They were a hefty lot in those days, and a scrap was never refused. The occurred one of the most glorious fights that Havant ever saw. For an hour they surged up and down East and West Streets, victory sometimes leaning to one side, sometimes to the other. It looked like a huge rugby scrum surging up and down. The constabulary, wise in their generation, kept out of the way (there were only two of them), and battered and dishevelled the parties fought on.

But this was the last of the fight I saw, for just then I was seized by an irate parent, and, with something to speed my departure, was hurried home and sent to my room, for daring to slip out into the street at such an awful time, to ponder my iniquity. But I should have liked to seen the end of the fight. Well to the joy of the majority, the Liberals were returned, but as I said before our poor old Squire lost his seat at Portsmouth.

Hampshire Telegraph, 4 January 1935

Of course Havant came under the area of South Hampshire in its electoral division and the result of the poll had the Liberal the Hon. William Cowper-Temple at the top and in second place Lord Henry Douglas-Scott-Montagu, a Conservative, both being elected. Mirroring the fight in Havant one could say an honourable draw was a fair result.

Meanwhile back in Portsmouth after his defeat Stone retired to Leigh Park, possibly reflecting on his parliamentary career and also what would become his next move. Politically his next move was very soon.

In October 1874 he was contacted by the Chatham Liberal Association to see if he would stand in the next election because the current member Mr. A.J Otway intimated his desire to stand down at the next election. Stone gave his assurance and willingness to stand but an election at Chatham came sooner rather than later when the other sitting member for Chatham, Admiral George Elliott, was relinquishing his seat to become, ironically, Commander-in-Chief at Portsmouth. Stone was nominated the Liberal candidate in the new by-election in a two man fight against the Conservative candidate, John Eldon Gorst.

The result at the election, held on 14 February 1875 was again a defeat for Stone, losing to his opponent by 215 votes:

Stone 1,958 Gorst 2,173

This would appear to be the end of his political aspirations but he tried again in April 1880 when he stood again in the Liberal colours at Greenwich and again he was defeated finishing fourth of the four candidates, when again the Conservatives swept the board with Baron Henry de Worms and Sir Thomas Boord being elected. He never again tried to win a seat and we will leave this section of his life with a verse, sang to the tune of 'Pop Goes the Weasel', which was sung by the jubilant Conservative voters at the end of the Portsmouth Election in 1874 – as some would say a little of the truth about it:

*Elphinstone's at the top of the poll,
Bruce is close behind him
Stone's gone home to shut up his park
And Portal's gone to find him.*

After his defeat at Portsmouth Stone carried on as before at Leigh Park and Havant, serving the local community in his capacity as a magistrate as well as the usual opening of the gardens and ground to the public such as on Easter Monday (6 April 1874) when the "Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes" held their annual field day and fete at Leigh Park:

Mr W.H. Stone, Esq., with his usual kindness, lent the grounds to the committee. They surround the spacious mansion and command a view of some most magnificent scenery. Trains ran from Portsmouth about every half hour, and during the whole of the day the road to the park was crowded with foot passengers, many of whom took the opportunity of visiting Leigh Cottages, erected near the entrance to the grounds, and the pattern farmyard on the estate.

Hampshire Telegraph, 8 April 1874

Leigh Cottages, which still survive, were one of the last building projects carried out by Stone at Leigh Park, situated on Petersfield Road they were estate workers cottages, and no doubt built with bricks and tiles made on the estate.

The gardens were open as usual on Coronation Day 1874 when the Borough of Portsmouth Temperance Society held their fete in the grounds, sadly one of the last times under William Stone the grounds would be open in this way.

The End of an Era – The Sale of the Leigh Park Estate

For whatever the reason in the autumn of 1874 Stone decided to put up the Leigh Park Estate for sale. Various reasons have been put forward for his decision to sale and move away from the area. Some people have put it down to his losing the election in February 1874 but this is unlikely as we have seen he could have easily put himself forward for the election in 1880 and he did try to regain a seat at Chatham in February 1875.

Maybe money problems were behind his decision, it can easily be gauged that he put an enormous amount of money into the Leigh Park Estate but he did have numerous business interests which we will look at in a little detail later. It is known that he helped clear the debts of his father-in-law, Sir Arthur Helps when business interests in the Bishops Waltham Railway Company and the Bishop Waltham Clay and Tile Company failed. Sir Arthur died on 17 March 1875, around the time of Stone's eventual

departure from Leigh Park and it is feasible that family financial problems may have played a part in his decision to sale.

Stone was also popular in the neighbourhood of Havant as well as Portsmouth of which testimonials to him from both towns testify. He was regarded as a fair man to work for and he looked after his workers and tenants alike and this can be seen for example by the building of better quality estate cottages for both workers and tenants. Locally, as lord of the manor of Havant, as well as being a local magistrate for the town, brought him into more contact with the town and his generosity for good causes in the neighbourhood did not go amiss.

At the time of his departure from Leigh Park he also was in possession of Casino House at Dulwich Hill, an estate he held as a tenant until around 1880 and had been in possession by him and his father before him since about 1830. He also held two different London residences, one at 49 Eaton Place, Pimlico and later at No. 11 Chalk Street, St. George's, Hanover Square, a large four storey Georgian mansion of which he is recorded living there with his family and a large staff at the time of the 1881 census.

Whatever the reason on 28 October 1874 the Leigh Park Estate was once again put up for auction and would begin another chapter in its long history. The sale particulars which appeared in the national press give us a good description of the estate at the time of the sale:

THE LEIGH PARK ESTATE HANTS 1874.



SOUTH ENTRANCE LODGE

RUSHWORTH, ABBOTT & RUSHWORTH
Land Agents & Surveyors
25, LITTLE RUM, REGENT STREET, W.
AND 10, CHURCH, ALLEY, COVENTRY, E.C.

STEVENS & CO. LONDON

Cover of the 1874 Sales Catalogue for the Sale of the Leigh Park Estate. Ironically the cover shows one of the Lodges built by Sir George Staunton Bt. and not one of Stone's buildings.

HAMPSHIRE.

Particulars and Conditions of Sale

OF A DISTINGUISHED, AND EXTREMELY

VALUABLE AND COMPACT

Freehold Manorial Estate,

KNOWN AS

"LEIGH PARK."

Almost entirely LAND TAX REDEEMED, delightfully situate within one mile-and-a-half of
the Town of

HAVANT,

Where there is a Junction Station on the Great London and Portsmouth, and London, Brighton and South
Coast Railways, about fifteen minutes' ride by rail from Portsmouth, and within sixty-five miles of London;

IT COMPREHENDS A SUPERB

NEWLY-BUILT MANSION,

STANDING IN AN OPEN LEVYED GROUND

WELL WOODED PARK.

Of about 200 Acres, and commanding most extensive and beautiful Views of the Isle of Wight
and the surrounding Picturesque Sea and Island Scenery, with four Lodge Entrances and
Carriage Drives.

CONSERVATORY & TERRACE WALKS.

EXCELLENT STABLING,

Extensive and very beautiful Gardens and Pleasure Grounds,

AN ORNAMENTAL LAKE.

WATER AND TRUSTS IN CONNECTION,

With Bathrooms, Billiard Room and Farm Buildings. The Estate includes

SEVERAL CAPITAL FARMS,

WITH NUMEROUS SUPERIOR COTTAGES AND OTHER HOLDINGS.

And comprises a total area (including the "WATERLOO" tract) nearly

1866 ACRES,

AND APPROXIMATE

EXCELLENT SPORTING;

for Sale by Auction, by Messrs.

RUSHWORTH, ABBOTT & RUSHWORTH,

At the Mart, Tokenhouse Yard, near the Bank of England, London,

On WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 26th, 1874, at 1 for 2 o'Clock precisely,

IN LOTS AS HEREINAFTER DESCRIBED.

The Mansion may be viewed on special days by Cards only, to be obtained of Messrs. RUSHWORTH, ABBOTT & RUSHWORTH, Surveyors and Auctioneers, 22, Saville Row, Regent Street, W.; and 19, Change Alley, Cornhill, London, E.C., of whom Particulars with Plans and Views (price 2s. 6d. each) may be obtained. Particulars may also be had of Messrs. NICHOLSON, SANDERSON & HENDERSON, Solicitors, 22, Fenchurch Street, London, E.C.; of Messrs. NEWMAN & AYLES, Land Agents, Farnham, and at the Mart, London. Mr. CARTER at Leigh Park Farm, will show the Estate.

The Leigh Park Estate, Hants.

Rushworth, Abbott, and Rushworth beg to announce that the particulars, with drawings of the Mansion and Park, and Plans of the Estate, are now published, and may be obtained, price 2s. 6d. each at their offices, No 22, Saville-Row, Regent Street, and 19 Change-Alley, Cornhill, E.C.

The Leigh Park Estate, - A distinguished and exceedingly valuable and compact Freehold Manorial Domain, almost entirely land-tax redeemed, delightfully situated in one of the most favourite parts of the county, in the rural parishes of Bedhampton and Havant, within one and a half miles of the town of Havant, where there is a junction station on the direct London to Portsmouth, and London, Brighton and South Coast Railways, with a good service of trains, and thence within two hours ride by rail to the metropolis. The Estate is also about seven miles from Portsmouth, and nine from Chichester, Petersfield and Fareham.

The mansion is in the pointed Gothic style of architecture, adapted from the 14th century, and presents a handsome structure in red brick, with stone dressings. It is approached by carriage drives, terminating in lodge entrances in various styles, and commands extensive views of the Isle of Wight and the surrounding picturesque sea and inland scenery, the varied beauties of which can scarcely be over-rated. It stands on high ground in an undulating and well-wooded park of about 300 acres, and was erected about ten years since from the designs and under the supervision of an eminent architect, in a most substantial manner, the woodwork being principally of oak, and finished in excellent taste.

It contains 24 principal and secondary bed and dressing rooms, besides nurseries, ladies boudoir, two bathrooms, noble hall with gallery, elegant drawing room, communicating with a spacious conservatory, morning room, library, study, dining and billiard rooms, smoking room in the tower, and well-arranged servants apartments and domestic offices in the wing of the building, with good cellarage under; excellent stabling for about 15 horses, carriage houses, etc., all in perfect order and well supplied with water. The gardens and pleasure grounds of about 30 acres are artistically laid out in sloping lawns, with parterres, terrace walks, and arcades of a very beautiful character, embellished with well-grown timber in almost endless variety, including unusually fine specimens of rare trees and shrubs. An ornamental lake with rustic bridges and islands planted with rhododendrons adds to the charm of the demesne. There are also large fruit and vegetable gardens, a Victoria Regia House, with an exceedingly fine specimen, a complete range of hot and succession houses, with vineries, pine pits, peach and orchard houses, fernery, and numerous superior cottages. The Estate comprises a total area of nearly 1,900 acres, which include the park and the Home and Middle Park Farms are in hand. Of this area the celebrated woodlands called the Thicket comprise about 700 acres, with a broad avenue of a mile and a quarter, opening from the mansion, with many miles of beautiful turf drives and rides. The remainder of the Estate is divided into convenient farms and accommodation holdings, the land being of capital quality and well farmed, The Estate affords excellent partridge, pheasant, and woodcock shooting, and adjoins the coverts of Lord Sherborne, Sir Jervois Clarke-Jervoise, Bart., and J. Deverell, Esq., and is within easy drives of the seats of Sir W. Knighton, Bart., and G. Wilder, Esq. The Hambledon Hounds hunt the district, a short distance off there is a private cricket ground with pavilion in the park. This beautiful residential Estate is worthy the attention of a nobleman or gentleman seeking an abode in the South of England, with all the sporting advantages and other enjoyments which a resident proprietor can desire.

The Times, 10 October 1874



‘The Grand Hall’, Leigh Park House. Engraving from 1874 Sales Catalogue

The estate at the time of the sale was acquired by Major-General Sir Frederick Wellington John Fitzwygram, Bart., and another chapter in the history of the Leigh Park Estate would begin.

Before Stone left Leigh Park both the towns of Havant and Portsmouth presented testimonials to him to commemorate his service to both towns. It was decided that the “Stone Scholarship” be set up by subscriptions from both towns to enable boys from both neighbourhood’s to attend the new Portsmouth Grammar School and further to encourage and assist pupils to be able to attend one of the Universities. By March 1875 the subscriptions had reached over £340.

At a meeting at Havant Town Hall on 13 January 1875 the people of Havant gave their blessing to the new scholarship at Portsmouth Grammar School, fitting for someone with a keen enthusiasm for education, and many of the worthies of the town sang the praises of the work Stone had done in the neighbourhood and were sad at his departure. One example being from the Revd John Barton of nearby East Leigh House:

That this meeting desires, on the occasion of the departure of Mr Stone, of Leigh Park, to recognise the benefits to the neighbourhood received at his hands, and to express its regret at losing him as a neighbour and a friend.

They would all regret the loss of one who had been for more than ten years one of their fellow parishioners, and who had shown his desire to advance the comfort and welfare of those who belonged to his estate. Prior to Mr Stone coming among them, they would remember there were many cottages which they would not now think fit to put their horses in; and Mr Stone’s desire and object had been not merely to build good and substantial houses, but to provide for the wants of his friends and neighbours. It might only be a theory but they had no strikes among the labourers here. There had been real contentment here while there had been so much discontent throughout the country. Without any reference to what had taken place at Portsmouth, they had at Havant and in

the neighbourhood every reason to regret the departure of Mr Stone, who, he understood, feared he should never meet with a place he liked so well as this.

Reading the speeches of the many who sang the praises of Stone it does appear as the Rev Barton records that Stone was well liked at Leigh Park for the good treatment of his staff and tenants as well as in the wider neighbourhood. It all adds to the mystery why he decided to depart Leigh Park for good. Certainly, by the middle of March 1875, William Stone and his family had departed Leigh Park for and removed to their other estate, Casino House at Dulwich Hill in Surrey. On 20 March 1875 a notice appeared in the local press: *'All persons having any Claims for Goods supplied to Leigh Park are particularly requested to send the same, as soon as possible to W.H. Stone, Dulwich Hill.'* Leigh Park was now in the hands of Sir Frederick Fitzwygram, Bart., and his family retained ownership of the estate for the next sixty five years.



The remains of William Stone's mansion – the undercroft and terrace, 1993

William Henry Stone - Life after Leigh Park

It is presumed that Stone and his family removed to Casino House, Dulwich Hill, after departing Leigh Park but in April 1874 Stone is also recorded living at 49 Eaton Place in London, perhaps a rented London residence. It is also recorded around the mid-1870s that the family were also living at Norbury Park, near Dorking in Surrey and this it is believed was on a short term lease until they acquired the Lea Park Estate at Witley, near Godalming in 1878. Sometime before 1880 the lease of Casino House was also not renewed, probably again at the time of acquiring the Lea Park Estate. To confuse matters even further it would appear that the family were also renting another London residence at 11 Charles Street, near Westminster, which the family were residing in at the time of the census in 1881. It does appear a little confusing where the Stone family were actually living at any specific time during the mid and late 1870s.

In April 1874, soon after departing Leigh Park, William Stone was the victim of fraud carried out by his private secretary, Charles Joseph Ackrill, who allegedly stole £125 and a banker's passbook from him. The case attracted attention from various newspapers across the country including this account from the *Bradford Observer*:

Fraud by a Private Secretary

At the Westminster Police Court, yesterday, Charles Joseph Ackrill, aged twenty-eight, described as a shorthand writer, was charged with stealing on the 16th April instant, at 49 Eaton Place, £125 and a banker's pass-book, the property of Mr William Henry Stone, of Dulwich Hill, a justice of the peace for the County of Surrey. It appeared from the evidence that the prisoner had been for some time private secretary, at £120 a year, to Mr Stone, and had the control of the private accounts and petty cash. On Thursday last he applied for leave of absence on account of illness, and on Friday Mr Stone discovered that the prisoner had taken away £125 loose cash and the bankers' (Messrs. Glyn & Co's.) pass-book. The prisoner, when he was arrested, said he was guilty. He was remanded for a week.

Bradford Observer, 21 April 1874

One other charge of forgery was also brought against Ackrill but unfortunately it is not known what the outcome was at any later trial.



Norbury Park House, Mickleham, built 1774

William Stone acquired the Lea Park Estate, Witley, Surrey, for the price of £50,000 on 22 October 1878, the at the same time as relinquishing the Norbury Park Estate. Interestingly, and co-incidentally, the estate of Lea Park was originally known as Leigh House and Leigh Park before becoming known as Lea Park. The estate, which was put up for sale in June 1878 was described at the time as a:

Truly valuable Freehold Residential Estate in extent of 710 acres with a richly timbered park of 120 acres with several ponds of ornamental water along with shrubberies, shaded walks, and pleasure

grounds, along with two very compact farms. The house was three storied, almost mock Tudor in design and was described as: A modern sized mansion containing three reception rooms hall, housekeeper's room, seven principal and nine secondary bedrooms with domestic offices,

Unbelievably, Stone, as he did at Leigh Park, employed Richard William Drew to design and build a new house for him at Lea Park. In July 1880 a report in the *Hampshire Telegraph* remarked that:

Mr W.H. Stone, who now resides at Lea Park, Witley, where he is having a new mansion erected at considerable cost, was present on Monday at the annual dinner of the Oddfellows' Lodge of that parish, dressed in full regalia as a brother of the Association.

It would appear then that after buying the Lea Park Estate Stone, like he did at Leigh Park, almost immediately embarked on building a new residence for himself. The estate and new house can be best described in the sales details of 20 May 1893 after Stone had put the Lea Park Estate up for sale:

Midway between Godalming and Haslemere, admittedly the choicest part of the favourite residential county of Surrey, two and a half miles from Witley and Milford Stations respectively on the Portsmouth main line of the South-Western Railway, and a little over an hour from London. – The unusually charming Freehold Residential and Manorial Estate, known as Lea Park, embracing an area of about 700 acres, and comprising a residence which may properly be described as one of the most perfect, moderate-sized mansion houses in the kingdom. Although erected in the past twelve years, it is nevertheless surrounded by splendidly timbered and beautifully matured pleasure grounds, the site for the present residence having been chosen near that of the former house, the position of which, for the beauty of environment, was probably unequalled even in the highly-favoured county of Surrey. The present mansion, which was built from masterly designs, after the Queen Anne period, by Mr R.W. Drew, architect, is approached by a winding carriage drive, with lodge at entrance, after traversing a picturesque and pleasantly undulating park. The interior arrangements are in exquisite taste, and are sumptuous without being pretentious, no expense having been spared to supply every comfort which modern science could suggest, and every luxury that an exacting taste could require. The estate, for its size, offers unusually good sporting advantages. The Chiddingfold and the Surrey Union packs of foxhounds hunt the district; and coverts on the property are so exceptionally well disposed and watered that a much greater head of game can be reared and preserved than could be expected from an estate of such a convenient size, while the ornamental ponds are plentifully stocked with fish. The roads in the vicinity are some of the best in England, and afford most enjoyable and healthful drives amidst pine woods and heathland, commanding varied and matchless views of the most interesting inland scenery.

Messrs. Walton and Lee have been favoured with instructions to offer the above property for sale by private treaty.

The Standard, 20 May 1893

It seems quite extraordinary that Stone went through the same event as at Leigh Park by building another residence to replace the one that was already there. It certainly shows that his finances were in good order at the time of acquiring the Lea Park Estate and as the sale particulars of May 1893 tell us the parkland and '*beautifully matured pleasure grounds*' were also of the highest quality. One other similar fact was that Stone, like at Leigh Park, spent about the same period of time at Lea Park before moving on to other premises.

So what do we know of William Stone's business interests? He held directorships in various companies, such as the British & American Mortgage Company, Provident Life, and was one of the longest serving directors and deputy chairman of the London and County Banking Company, which later became the London & Westminster Bank and is known today as the National Westminster (Nat. West) Bank. He was also a partner in the firm of Frith, Sands & Co., financiers, merchants, and East India Agents, of Old Broad Street, London, as well as being chairman of the Council of the Girl's Public Day School Company.



Lea Park, Witley, Surrey, circa 1890

He also had other various private business interests including directorships in the Bishops Waltham Railway Company and Bishops Waltham Clay Company in conjunction with his father-in-law, Sir Arthur Helps, although both schemes were not a great success.

It would appear from his business dealings that Stone was quite astute business man and also quite a wealthy man and it is improbable that the reason he left Leigh Park was for financial reasons. As we have also seen he soon acquired another relatively large estate after leaving Leigh Park for a large sum and his residences in London, either leased or rented, would not have come cheap.

As in Hampshire Stone sat as a magistrate in Surrey and also became a deputy-lieutenant of the county. He also got involved politically in the county as for many years he was President of the Guildford Central Liberal Association. He was a Governor of Harrow School and of Dulwich College, and was Deputy-Chairman of the Board in each case and was also a Governor of the Central Foundation Schools. He was also for many years Chairman of the Committee of the Female Orphan Asylum, Beddington, Surrey. He was also patron of four livings, namely: St Paul's, Herne Hill; St. John's, Brixton; St Phillip's, Ilfracombe and St James's, Parkham, Devonshire.

In January 1889 Thomas Hall-Hall of Witley Manor, Godalming, wrote to Viscount Middleton of Peper Harrow, Godalming, in respect of Stone becoming a County Councilor or an Alderman in Surrey. Surrey

had been incorporated as a Municipality in 1879 and the first elected council sat in January 1880. Hall-Hall was convinced that Stone was '*one of the fittest of the most*' to sit either as a County Councilor or as an Alderman. Unfortunately nothing came of Hall-Hall's proposal in spite of this glowing reference:

My Dear Lord Middleton

In considering who ought to be chosen as County Aldermen I daresay the name of Mr Stone of Lea Park has occurred to you. If not may I suggest that he would be one of the fittest of the most. I need not mention his financial experience and general position which are as well known to you as to me. Though I believe he has not lately taken an active part in county business, he used to do so when he lived at Dulwich.

You may not know when it was rumoured that your lordship intended to stand for a division of Godalming it was proposed here to ask Mr Stone for the Haslemere division, Mr Eastwood had said he himself was unwilling to do so. Mr Stone was ready to come forward. Then your candidature was announced and Mr Stone did not wish to oppose you, nor was it wished he should. If he was willing to become a County Councilor by election I supposed he would be gratified by being chosen as an Alderman, but my suggesting his name to you is solely my idea. In this county there are no dealt many men well qualified to be chosen as Aldermen, but few that I know of so likely to be useful in the council as Mr Stone, I venture to ask whether you do not think the same. Should you take the position of Aldermen, would it not be well to get Mr Stone to take the vacancy.

Hoping that you will not mind my making these suggestions.

Yours Sincerely

T. Hall Hall, 19 January 1881

Surrey History Centre, 1248/29/144

Viscount Middleton himself did not become an alderman or county councillor, though he did serve as lord lieutenant of Surrey between 1896 and 1905.

On 27 April 1891 at Lea Park, Melicent, the wife of William Stone, died aged only 44. It is unclear what was the cause of her death. The following year, with one eye on the future Stone wrote his will, which we will look at in depth later.

Of his two children, Arthur William Stone, followed his father to Harrow School and then to Trinity College, Cambridge, but not with the academic success of his father. He married on 31 March 1901 to Evelyn Le Mottee of Guernsey. In the 1901 census recorded the following month after the marriage he is living in Chelsea on his own means, presumably from monies inherited from his father. The 1911 census records him at the same address at Tedworth Square, Chelsea, where he is described as a book publisher. He died aged 51 in London on 15 March 1917.

Melicent Stone, the daughter of William and Melicent Stone died unmarried in Hammersmith, London on 10 February 1922 aged 54. She worked as a sculptor, painter, illustrator and author. She wrote and illustrated the popular 'Bankside Costume Book for Children' published in 1913. Melicent also exhibited at the Royal Academy in both Scotland and London and held exhibitions of her work throughout the country and also abroad.

As we have already seen Stone sold Lea Park House in 1893 and moved to Lower House, Bowlhead Green, Thursley, situated only around one mile south of Lea Park. The house, formerly known as Lower House Farmhouse and of a much larger holding was already incorporated into the Lea Park Estate and it is believed that Stone leased the house after the sale of Lea Park. The new occupant of Lea Park House, but only for a short period, was a Colonel Davison and his wife and a report in the press stated that Lea Park mansion was sold for £26,000 at this time. It would appear that not all of the Lea Park Estate was sold at this sale as in June 1894 another private sale took place *'of several valuable high-class Freehold Building Properties, consisting of the unsold portions of the Lea Park, and consisting of an area of about 233 acres.'* This consisted of a farm, two cottages, and woods and plantations.

After the sale of Lea Park mansion in May 1893 another sale followed this on 5 December 1893 when the furniture and effects of Lea Park were also sold:

The valuable contents of the Mansion being the bed and dressing rooms, halls, staircase and vestibule, boudoir, two drawing-rooms, library, dining and billiard rooms, smoking room, business room etc.... and the whole of the kitchen and culinary requisites, an omnibus, landau, quantity of harness, three boats and numerous outdoor effects.

The Standard, 11 November 1893

At some stage soon after Lea Park was acquired by the notorious financier and fraudster Whittaker Wright who reputedly spent one and a quarter million in ornamenting the grounds with artificial lakes and bringing marble over from Italy for statues. He rebuilt the house pulling down sections of Stone's building and adding new styles with a palm house, revolving glass dome, and a room under one of the lakes with a dome reaching out of the lake. He also installed an observatory, a theatre, a velodrome, a private hospital, and stabling for fifty horses. Looking at a later photograph of Lea Park House enough of Stone's mansion survived the rebuild. Wright had started acquiring the land around Witley in 1890 and Lea Park House and its estate appears to have been the final piece of the jigsaw.

Whittaker Wright went to America around 1870 speculating in mining, oil and silver, and became a millionaire by the age of 31 and returned to England in 1889. In 1891 he promoted shareholders' money in companies, including the London and Globe Finance Company, but false statements were made, and although Wright was a millionaire in England by 1897, the company went into receivership. He was declared bankrupt in January 1903 and fled to France and was finally arrested in New York and extradited to London and faced charges of fraud at the Old Baily. On 26 January 1904 he was found guilty and sentenced to seven years imprisonment but he committed suicide by swallowing cyanide in a court anteroom immediately afterward.

Lea Park was put up for sale in October 1905 but did not find a buyer until 1909 when the estate became known as Witley Park. The estate at the time of the first sale in 1905 measured 2,840 acres and included Lower House, Thursley, as part of the Lea Park Estate. This again suggests that maybe Stone retained the lease of Lower House at the time of the sale in 1893. The house at Lea Park (Witley Park) was burnt down in 1952.

So why the move from Lea Park to a much smaller house? Could it have been for financial reasons again or was it just a case of down-sizing, after all Melicent, his wife, had died in April 1891 and his children were both adults by this time. Like his leaving of Leigh Park in 1874 his move from Lea Park in 1893 appears at the time to be a mystery.

Lower House at the time of the sale in October 1905 was described as:

A most attractive Freehold Residential Property situate in the parish of Thursley, in a very beautiful district, about two miles from Witley Station and three and a half miles from Haslemere.

It comprises a picturesque Gabled Residence occupying a very high and beautiful situation on the borders of Lea Park. The house stands quite secluded in its own grounds and is exceptionally well fitted having been re-modelled within the last few years and includes drawing room, dining room, morning room etc. and eight bedrooms and dressing rooms with good stabling and coach-house and over 23 acres.

The house at the time of the sale in 1905 was let on lease and it is unclear if the re-modelling noted in the sales particulars was carried out by Stone or a later occupier.



Lea Park, Witley, after the alterations by Whittaker Wright, circa 1900

Stone resided at Lower House for about three years before his death at the age of 61 on 7 November 1896. He died suddenly while on a visit to his brother-in-law Edmund Arthur Helps, the brother of his wife Melicent, at the 'Bungalow,' Coleshill, Amersham, Buckinghamshire. He was buried alongside his wife in the churchyard of All Saints Church, Witley, on 12 November 1896. Later the ashes of his son Arthur and daughter Melicent were buried with their parents.

In his will his estate was divided between his son Arthur and daughter Melicent with Arthur receiving the bulk of his estate and also being made a partner in the firm of Frith, Sands & Co. Melicent was given a legacy of £15,000 and all the jewellery and personal effects of her late mother. There were other legacies to his step mother Catherine and an annuity of £52 during the lifetime of his old servant Joseph Taylor. On 27 January 1897 probate of the will was granted to Arthur Stone, the sole executor with effects of £8,997 2s. 4d.

Perhaps his will gives the answer to why he moved to Lower House, Thursley. Written in April 1892 while still resident at Lea Park there is no mention of any property at all in the will and as we have seen Stone only left a little under £9,000 at his death in November 1896. It could be conjectured that financial problems again had arisen during the later period of his residency at Lea Park. Some have even argued, but this is pure speculation, that Stone may have put money into Whittaker Wright's schemes and lost money in that way but most of Wright's fraudulent schemes happened after Stone's death. But whatever the reason it is fair to say that the leaving of Lea Park was probably for financial reasons.



Lower House, Bowlhead Green, Thursley

Conclusion

Unfortunately, along with his wife and two children, Stone died at a relatively young age but looking at his life in general he led quite a full and packed life. Not many could say that they established two estates to their own liking as he did at Leigh Park and Lea Park. Perhaps his political career did not reach the great heights of some of his contemporaries but as a man of patronage and beneficence, especially during his time at Leigh Park and also in Surrey, he has to be admired. We have noted the parts he played in promoting education and luckily the former Bedhampton School which he played a large part in building still stands as a reminder of his patronage, as does the former Town Hall building in Havant, now part of the Spring Arts and Heritage Centre.

Certainly the history of the Leigh Park Estate and especially how the estate changed in almost its entirety from an estate of the Regency period under Sir George Staunton to a mid-Victorian Gothic pile adds romance to the history of Leigh Park. Fragments of his house, along with his stable block, lodge and cottages, survive and mingle with older parts of the estate from and before Staunton's time to give us a rich tapestry in the fascinating history of Leigh Park.

Some may argue that Stone destroyed too much of Staunton's wonderful and unique park and gardens but it has to be remembered that Staunton only added to what was there before him in creating his masterpiece from the groundwork created by William Garret before him. To be fair to Stone he left enough of Staunton's gardens to allow us to see the masterwork of what they rightly were and Stone, like his predecessors, left enough of his imprint at Leigh Park again for us to enjoy.

Notes on Richard William Drew:

Born 1834 in parish of St. Magarets, Westminster. Son of George Drew, (1789-1862), a solicitor and land speculator of Bermondsey, Streatham and Caterham area. Mother was Mary Drew (nee Harvey), (1791-1864), of Folkstone, Kent.

1858- obtained BA at Trinity College, Cambridge – pupil of architect Henry Woodyer (1816-1896) although exact architectural relationship not known

1860 Architect and Surveyor 9 Pall Mall

Buildings in Havant area designed by Richard William Drew:

1863 – Leigh Park, Havant, Hampshire. Large house for William Henry Stone

c.1863 – Leigh Park Stable Block (Grade II Listed Building), Petersfield Road

1868 – North Lodge, Leigh Park, standing, although modified late 20th century
1863-1870 – Leigh Cottages, Petersfield Road, Havant, still standing although some have been modified 20th century

*1863-1870 – Prospect Cottages, Prospect Lane, Havant. Farm cottages built after W.H. Stone acquired Leigh (Prospect) Farm in 1863. Still standing.

1863-1870 – Hartley's Store, Bedhampton Road, Bedhampton. Opposite Old Bedhampton School. Attributed to Drew on artistic grounds – may have been used as school masters' house

1868 – Bedhampton School, Bedhampton. William Henry Stone landowner and benefactor

1870 – Town Hall, Havant. William Henry Stone, chairman of a company set up to provide a town hall

1874 – St. Faith's Church, Havant. Tower and Nave rebuilt

- Other estate buildings, including further cottages designed by Drew for Stone, have unfortunately been demolished.



Leigh Water from the terrace of the former Leigh Park House, July 2016



Stables and Coachhouse, Leigh Park, built by William Stone, circa 1863



Terrace of Leigh Park House from Cottage Island



Entrance into Storey Gardens, the former kitchen garden of William Stone's Leigh Park House

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The grave of William Henry Stone, All Saints Church, Witley